

THE LINGUISTIC IMPACT OF THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMANDEBELE AND  
AMAXHOSA ON THE ISIXHOSA LANGUAGE AND AMAXHOSA CULTURE IN THE MBEMBESI AREA  
OF ZIMBABWE

BY

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SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE SUBJECT OF

LANGUAGES, LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE

AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NOVEMBER 2019

## DECLARATION

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I, Ethelia Sibanda, declare that **THE LINGUISTIC IMPACT OF THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMANDEBELE AND AMAXHOSA ON THE ISIXHOSA LANGUAGE AND AMAXHOSA CULTURE IN THE MBEMBESI AREA OF ZIMBABWE**, is my own work and all sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



14/12/2019

Signature

Date

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this hard work to my late parents Mnyamana Sibanda and Langa Ncube Sibanda, the great education visionaries. I also dedicate it to my beloved sons, Gracious Muzenda and Sambulo Mabhena who stood by me, encouraging and giving me moral support.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to extend my profound gratitude to my promoter Professor Davie E. Mutasa for his sterling work of helping, supporting and encouraging me during the time of my toil. I also thank my co-promoter Doctor Dumisani G. Spofana for his immense contribution to the success of this work. I greatly appreciate the financial support I received from UNISA Financial Aid Bureau, without which this research would be impossible. My sincere gratitude is extended to Prof S. Nyota who took her time to help me to come up with an acceptable proposal. I am grateful to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education that gave me permission to visit the schools in Mbembesi. This came through the Provincial Education Director Mr J. Mpofu and the District Schools Inspector Mrs S. Gwaza. I thank the school heads of Maqaqeni, Mqwashwini, Mfanyana and Cameron primary schools for their support and information. I also thank collectively the teachers of the same schools for their information. My sincere gratitude goes to Chief D. Ndondo Hadebe, who gave me information, and allowed me to carry out research in his jurisdiction, he also organised elders and youths for me to carry out focus group interviews. I also thank Mr T. Nyilika the Xhosa Cultural Society committee member, Mr M.Dlamini the Xhosa activist and Nolwazi for supplying information related to amaXhosa culture. I thank Mr J. Mabasa for the help and company in my visits. My gratitude also goes to Mr P. and Mrs Mabasa for looking after me for the whole week at their home. I extend my gratitude to Prof J. Gonye who edited my work to match the British English standard. My gratitude also goes to Dr S. Hadebe, Dr W. Matsa, Dr W. Chindedza and Mr G. Muzenda who assisted me with ideas and related literature. I thank Rodney Mutangadura and Tatenda Chikwadze for their outstanding computer expertise, without which I could not produce presentable work. Finally, I would like to thank all my colleagues, friends and family members I have not mentioned by name who gave me moral support and supported me in their different ways. To everyone, mentioned or not, I say do not tire in doing well, God rewards good work.

## **ABSTRACT**

The study sought to investigate how the symbiotic relationship between amaXhosa and amaNdebele impacted on IsiXhosa language and amaXhosa culture in Mbembesi area in Zimbabwe. The study was conducted where two ethnic groups of amaXhosa and amaNdebele coexist. Language policies in the past have disadvantaged amaXhosa by treating the language as a minority language which led to its marginalisation at school and in public life. Dynamic Social Impact Theory was used to explain the concept of the evolution of language. Language contact, language change, and bilingualism are the main terms that were discussed in relation to what happened to the two languages of study. The case study was descriptive in nature. The participants were purposefully selected according to what the researcher desired to achieve. The data were collected through interviews with heads of schools in Mbembesi, teachers, elders and youths of the community. Document analysis was also employed when the Indigenous Languages syllabus and teachers' schemes were observed. The pupils were given a topic on which to write a short composition in IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele to ascertain if indeed IsiNdebele had impacted on IsiXhosa. A comparison between IsiXhosa of Mbembesi and that of South Africa was made as a way of verifying if there has been a change from the original IsiXhosa that is spoken in South Africa. The two ethnic groups' cultural activities were also studied as a way of investigating the level of impact in their way of life. After administering the research instruments, the findings revealed that there is a level of impact on IsiXhosa language and amaXhosa culture through their contact with amaNdebele. The terminology in the two languages has overlapped as well as their cultural lives. The Zimbabwean 2013 Constitution has tried to raise the status of IsiXhosa by making it officially recognised but it seems to be still functioning at community level as before. IsiXhosa is still not learned at school although it was introduced in 2013 in the two pilot schools but which discontinued in 2016 reverting to IsiNdebele citing lack of teaching and learning materials. The recommendations from the study include: that the teachers should be trained in IsiXhosa at institutions of higher learning; that amaXhosa educated personnel should spear-head the writing of teaching and learning materials and that the language should be used in public life so that its speakers maintain their identity.

## **KEY TERMS**

Language, officially recognised language, standard language, indigenous language, language change, bilingual, Zimbabwean 2013 Constitution, culture, symbiotic relationship, mfecane, Mfengu/Fingo

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CALP</b>	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
<b>DSIT</b>	Dynamic Social Impact Theory
<b>ECD</b>	Early Childhood Development
<b>FM</b>	Frequency Modulation
<b>L1</b>	First Language
<b>L2</b>	Second Language
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>SAHO</b>	South African History Online
<b>SCMC</b>	Socially Culturally Mediated Communication
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>UNISA</b>	University of South Africa
<b>VESOTOKA</b>	Venda, Sotho, Tonga and Kalanga
<b>VOA</b>	Voice of America
<b>ZBC</b>	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
<b>ZIMSEC</b>	Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council
<b>ZILPA</b>	Zimbabwe Indigenous Languages Promotion Association

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

##### **1.1.1 Context of the research**

This research is a case study of two ethnic groups of amaXhosa and amaNdebele of Zimbabwe who coexist in Mbembesi area which is about forty kilometres (40 km) north of Bulawayo city in Umguza district. The purpose of the study was to investigate effects of the symbiotic relationship between two ethnic groups which are in contact, amaNdebele and amaXhosa, on the IsiXhosa language and amaXhosa culture. IsiNdebele and IsiXhosa are Nguni languages of South Africa that have some common lexical items. Their cultures have some common aspects as well. Literature points out that there is a relationship between amaXhosa of South Africa and those of Zimbabwe as well as amaNdebele, the two groups that came to Zimbabwe as a result of *umfecane* that rose during Tshaka's reign in South Africa. (Butler 2015).

##### **1.1.2 Historical background**

This section presents the historical background that is quintessential for chapter four in which data is presented. This background is a focal cog and fulcrum to an understanding of the existence of amaXhosa of Mbembesi. It contributes to the discussion of the data in chapter four in a way difficult to quantify as it speaks and relates to the research findings presented in that chapter. This background centres on an area called Ingwenya Mission, also known as John Tallac, probably named after John Boyana Radasi, the missionary and founder of the mission.

##### **1.1.2.1 Ingwenya mission establishment**

To obtain this background, the researcher had an interview with a male teacher at John Tallac High School (Ingwenya Mission) in order to establish the background information concerning religion and education of amaXhosa community in Mbembesi area. He narrated the story of John Boyana Radasi, a missionary from Scotland, who came to Zimbabwe after hearing about

Cecil John Rhodes from Cape Town. He is said to have settled at Ingwenya Mission that was named after the river Nongwenya, which is close by with another river Jikijane that is on the other side. It is claimed that in 1905 Chief Manyathela Ngege offered him a piece of land where he established a primary school for amaXhosa boys who were taught to read the Bible. It is also alleged that Chief Khayisa Ndiweni an Ndebele chief also gave amaNdebele a piece of land and the latter displaced amaXhosa. Intermarriage has, however, promoted tolerance of the two ethnic groups of amaXhosa and amaNdebele.

The school is a multi-cultural centre that integrates students from all ethnic groups from all over the country, but IsiXhosa is referred to as the local indigenous language. Music in the school is said to integrate IsiXhosa and church sermons as well can be conducted in IsiXhosa. Historically, however, amaXhosa play an important role in the school. School children speak each other's languages and influence each other in their conversations. They also share music on important functions such as on Prize Giving Day. Surprisingly, the National Anthem is sung in English, IsiNdebele and ChiShona and never in IsiXhosa. Again, no IsiXhosa is taught in the school. Instead, IsiNdebele is taught from primary right through high school. The problem could be that Doke only recommended IsiNdebele to be taught in the schools in Matabeleland so IsiXhosa was disadvantaged.

#### **1.1.2.2 Religion and Education**

The interviewee gave the researcher a book which chronicles the history of amaXhosa establishment at Ingwenya mission and Mbembesi area written by Nicolson (1996). Nicolson (1996) presents a historical background of amaXhosa of Mbembesi emphasising on their religion, education and home life in brief. He writes about Stephen Hlazo, a Fingo, who went home to Mbembesi, from Bulawayo, to ask his father John to meet a Presbyterian minister, Mr Radasi, from Scotland. The missionary had stayed with Mr Mfazi in Gwanda as he preached the gospel to the residents who had been devastated by a drought. The residents' condition made them seek the help of rain from this missionary. It is alleged that during a gathering, a large black snake emerged from nowhere and he killed it, leading to a heavy downpour of rain that

day. The researcher believes these incidents led the residents to turn to the gospel that the missionary was preaching.

Nicolson (1996) goes on to state that Hlazo welcomed him in Mbembesi promising him settlement if he could seek consent from a Ndebele chief Ngege, who had been born in Lobengula's days. Radasi was indeed offered ten acres of land on which to build a church, a school and a home for him. Through the District Commissioner, he was given a lease to be renewed yearly for Ingwenya Mission. It was in 1905 that Radasi began to teach the community to sing by reading a line at a time because they were illiterate. He also taught them to read so that they could read the Bible for themselves. The Psalms were to be read in either IsiXhosa or IsiZulu. The Presbyterian hymn book had some Xhosa psalms and the Wesleyan hymn book had Zulu psalms. (Nicolson 1996).

Nicolson (1996) further notes that by the end of 1905, Radasi had established a school but very few children came to school and came irregularly. This was because parents required their services at home, such as herding cattle and also expected the missionary to pay them for attending his school. He began night school for the young men who were working during the day. Many were gradually converted to Christianity over years. Converts had to desist from superstitious beliefs, for example, that they had 'to doctor' their seed before planting it and that if one fell sick it was due to witchcraft. They had to also be persuaded to avoid polygamy. All the mentioned beliefs and practices were also found among the Ndebele community. 'Doctoring seed' for planting was referred to as *idibisi* in IsiNdebele.

Nicolson (1996) describes another dry spell that hit the Mbembesi area for ten months in 1905. The drought led to the rivers drying up and people walking long distances of six miles to fetch water from the nearest rivers, often infested with crocodiles. The Matabele elders consulted witch-doctors who blamed it on the existence of Cecil John Rhodes' statue in Bulawayo. Quite a number of villagers went to Bulawayo intending to remove the statue in Main Street claiming it prevented rains from falling but they were prevented by the magistrate who charged that there was no connection. It is clear that superstitious beliefs play an important role in influencing people's behaviour. Beliefs are part of people's culture. The people of Mbembesi, likewise,



were governed by their beliefs in their day to day lives. This was so among both amaXhosa and amaNdebele communities.

Nicolson (1996) proceeds to say that chief Ngege asked Mr Radasi to call for a prayer meeting which attracted the attendance of 300 civilians. It is said that a huge snake coiled in the centre of the church floor. The snake was then killed by villagers though hesitantly as they perceived it as a sign for rain. They performed prayers for forgiveness and rain fell that night till the next day. Having seen that, the minister called for a meeting of thanksgiving the following week. It seemed snakes were associated with the rain. Each time a snake appeared it was followed by heavy rains. Snakes were common though. Traditionally, they were said to have a strong relationship with nature and ancestors.

Nicolson (1996) records that Mr Radasi established a Bible class for the literate few. Mr Cameron, who was in Scotland, had to send English Bibles, some of which were translated into IsiXhosa though without indicating who did the translations since the community were not educated. The members would be encouraged to read the Bible and memorise some key verses. We are told that in 1906 the Fingo chief, Garner Sojini, joined the church with six other men from Mbembesi as well. Services were then held at Mbembesi, Ingwenya and Koco for the amaNdebele in those areas. Those who turned to the new faith were baptised. On Sabbath, chief Sojini conducted services at Mbembesi and Mr Radasi presented him with a large IsiXhosa Bible to use during services.

### **1.1.2.3 Home life**

The following is the cultural life of the two ethnic groups of amaXhosa and amaNdebele under study. Nicolson (1996) chronicles clearly the home life of amaXhosa at Ingwenya which automatically is the same as Mbembesi, and exactly the same for amaNdebele who were resident there as well. He notes that a kraal for human habitation was characterised by round huts made of pole and dagga and thatched with grass. The floor was earthen, smoothed over with cow dung and beaten until it shone. This was done in order to keep down the dust and insects. Men made a fence of twisted thorn trunks and branches around the homestead.

Polygamy was the way to go and seemed to be the norm. Each wife had her own hut while their children had their own. Grass mats were woven by women and used for sitting and sleeping on. They also made baskets of varying sizes, which were decorated with coloured grass. Larger ones were for holding grain while smaller ones were for collecting vegetables and wild fruits. Women also demonstrated skill in designing and moulding clay pots that were used in the kitchen for cooking and holding water or milk. All that has been said about amaXhosa can also be said of amaNdebele home life without any alteration as far as the researcher has experienced.

Nicolson (1996) affirms that cattle had a special place in the heart of an African man and marked the source of wealth used to pay *lobola* and for children's education. A cattle kraal was regarded as sacred and no woman was allowed there. Cattle had their own names that were mainly used when oxen were ploughing. Cattle herding was mainly done by boys and at times by men when boys were not available. Boys would attend school later than girls of their age because they would be herding cattle while waiting for their younger brothers to be old enough to take over cattle herding. In some instances, they would start school at ten to twelve years of age. Boys learnt about various plants and herbs, birds and insects as well as legends connected with them during the time they herded cattle. The people's source of sugar was bee-hives in the forest, that is, before the sugar from sugar cane came from South Africa (Nicolson 1996). All this can also be said of amaNdebele in the area as far as the researcher knows.

Nicolson (1996) further notes that girls were constantly with their mothers at home. At home they learned about home care, working in fields and caring for siblings. Only those school going girls would spend some time away from home. Values were instilled in children, for example, teaching them to respect and obey parents and older members of society. Whenever a person arrived at a home, he or she would say *Ekuhle* at the entrance of the yard as a way of asking to be received in the home. A man would be given a wooden stool to sit on while a woman would be given a mat. Men had a habit of beer drinking while women worked in the fields to provide food for the family. Men would often slaughter a sheep or goat and call neighbours to assist with weeding in the fields, and that would be done by families in turns, even on a Sabbath.

Parties were also commonly thrown just to celebrate achievements and some ritual occasions. AmaXhosa cultural life narrated is exactly the same way of life that was experienced by amaNdebele as known by the researcher.

#### **1.1.2.4 Nguni languages**

Butler (2015) affirms that Nguni languages are a group of Bantu languages spoken in Southern Africa by abeNguni. These languages include IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, IsiSwati, IsiNdebele (Southern Transvaal), IsiHlubi, IsiPhuthi and IsiNdebele (Northern Transvaal). The researcher came across a 1993 University of Zimbabwe IsiNdebele examination paper while undertaking her studies for Bachelor of Education Degree. She also came across a Bachelor of Arts General Degree paper for 1988 of which the two made some revelations. The papers revealed that IsiXhosa shares a lot of vocabulary with IsiZulu, IsiSwati and IsiNdebele, all of which have click sounds probably borrowed from the Tshwawo language of the Koisan people whom they interacted with. The symbiotic relationship between IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele and how the relationship has impacted on IsiXhosa was investigated in this study. The written languages were availed at one school where the researcher had given written work in the form of a composition topic that was to be written in both languages and she later compared the two languages.

AmaXhosa are predominantly found in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Hlobo (2015) estimates amaXhosa population to be at six million in South Africa with their Nguni ancestor as Tshawe having a Bantu Nguni language with sub-groups or dialects. These dialects include among others: IsiXhosa, IsiBhaca, IsiMfengu, IsiHlubi and IsiGqunukhwebe of Koisan origin. The dialect of interest in the study is IsiMfengu, which is found in Mbembesi area in Umguz district of Zimbabwe. What motivated the researcher was that the group is one of the so called minority groups in the country and therefore, no significant recorded research has been carried out about their language and culture except for *umguyo* cultural practice. It is also interesting to note how the two groups under study have impacted on each other and managed to coexist peacefully.

Butler (2015) records amaMfengu Xhosa as the descendant clans and chiefdoms that were displaced during the *umfecane* of the nineteenth century. A Xhosa activist elaborated on the

issue saying; after fleeing from Tshaka in Zululand and into Eastern Cape during *umfecane*, between 1818 and 1828, the Mfengu or Fingo group found work in Hintsa's kingdom in South Africa but were not regarded on equal terms with amaXhosa. Their mistreatment led them to join Reverend John Ayliff, a missionary working at Butterworth.

Butler (2015) also claims that Mzilikazi crossed Limpopo from Zululand through the Transvaal and into Zimbabwe during *umfecane*. He had with him a group of people from South Africa of mixed nations. The majority, however, came to Zimbabwe with Cecil John Rhodes. Ncube (2013) claims that in 1899 and 1900, 500 Mfengu families, labourers and farmers from Cape Town settled in Bulawayo, and were already Christians (Wesleyans, Anglicans and Presbyterians). He further notes that in Cape they were well-known for social cohesion, clan and family loyalty, education ambition and outstanding Christian conviction.

Ncube (2013) also indicated that Phathisa Nyathi the prominent Zimbabwean oral historian, identified the family names of the original Mfengu who migrated to Zimbabwe in the 1890s as Ndondo, Kona, Radebe (Hadebe), Nyilika, Mniki, Mpengesi, Majozi, Majola and Gagisa. Ncube (2013) identifies Grotboom, who, during 1896-1897 uprisings of Matabele, assisted in the arrangement of the first *Indaba* in the Matopos Hills with Cecil John Rhodes and was given a horse as a reward by Cecil John Rhodes. Cecil John Rhodes settled amaXhosa from Cape at Nyamandlovu, Matobo and Mbembesi.

Ncube (2013) quotes Nyathi as saying that the first group to settle in Mbembesi was under the chieftainship of Mveliswa Kona while others under Tembu settled at Gwayi River where they quickly built their own chapel and school and began to reach out to the neighbouring villages and mines in Shurugwi and Gweru, among other places. It is this part of amaMfengu sub-group that is found in Mbembesi in Umguza district, Fort Rixon in Filabusi, Motapa area in Bubi and in Chiwundura, just out of Gweru in Zimbabwe. These are the areas that are predominantly amaNdebele, according to him. In his survey of minority languages of Zimbabwe, Hachipola (1998) also confirms that the Mfengu originally settled in Mbembezi (Mbembesi) and adds that population pressures saw some moving to areas of Goromonzi, Musengezi and Marirangwe in Mashonaland and Gwatemba in Matabeleland. A Xhosa activist added that some Mfengu are

also found in Gutu in Masvingo, Mhondoro, and Chitomborwizi in Mashonaland West, Kennelworth near Gweru and Lower Gweru in Midlands and, finally, Mpolompolo in Nyathi which is found in Matabeleland.

#### **1.1.2.5 Contacts between amaXhosa and amaNdebele in Mbembesi**

Butler (2015) talks of the Mbembesi group as a diaspora community from South Africa. This Mfengu group, comprising of Gcaleka, Hlubi and Zulu groups, settled there around 1888. It is from amaZulu group from South Africa that IsiNdebele became the language of the area because Mzilikazi founded his Ndebele nation with a dominant IsiZulu language even though he added other sub-groups that he conquered who had different languages as he built his nation. As a result, other groups were forced to speak IsiNdebele in addition to their languages. Hachipola (1998) asserts that all Fingo (Fengu) speak Ndebele (IsiNdebele) in addition to their language. This is also what the current researcher observed with amaXhosa who are in contact with amaNdebele. The two languages share a lot of similar vocabulary although there are some lexical items that are different. Could it be that the languages stemmed from a common Nguni language or it is a result of their contact? This is the reason why the researcher wants to concentrate on the two languages that have been in contact for many decades. It is the researcher's hope that after this study, some other researchers will research on other areas especially in Mashonaland, to establish the impact of ChiShona language on IsiXhosa language.

The researcher strongly believes that all languages should be treated equally and given equal recognition. Recognising a language is recognising the people who speak it. Genuine interest in people is realised through an interest in their language. Currently, IsiXhosa seems not to be accorded the recognition it deserves, unlike what is happening with the other formerly marginalised languages. For example, it is not examined even at the lowest level of education and not used in public life unlike ChiTonga, an example of one language that has been recognised to the extent of being learnt up to university level.

In their cultural life, amaXhosa are well-known for maintaining their language and other cultural festivals such as circumcision, known as *ukwaluka* (*ukusoka* in IsiNdebele), as part of

their cultural life. For undisclosed reasons, Butler (2015) notes that when amaNdebele settled in Zimbabwe they abandoned the circumcision custom they were practicing in South Africa. This area of departure was investigated and reasons for abandonment were never discovered as those that were asked could not come up with any. The study also examined how the symbiotic relationship of the two ethnic groups has impacted on other cultural practices such as songs and dances, dress and worship, among other practices. It was discovered that school children are the ones that sing their songs and participate in dances together at school. A few amaXhosa women with attire which distinguishes them from the rest are still found but the majority has common dressing with amaNdebele. The worship of ancestors is not much practiced because most of them have become Christians.

The researcher's observation was that, in Zimbabwe, amaXhosa have lived under amaNdebele and amaShona who undermine them. AmaXhosa are forced to speak IsiNdebele and ChiShona while those two ethnic groups do not bother to learn IsiXhosa. The government has also marginalised amaXhosa and failed to recognise their language on equal status with IsiNdebele and ChiShona. This is evident in that IsiXhosa is not learnt at Primary School. Instead, they write IsiNdebele in their Grade 7 examinations. It is also affirmed by Velaphi (2011) where she said that many Xhosa people complain that they have to learn ChiShona in schools as there are no IsiXhosa literature books. The main reason for this is that, probably, there are no amaXhosa experts to teach the language since it is not offered at teachers' colleges. Velaphi (2011) indicated that the South African Xhosa king Sigcawu pledged to help amaXhosa school children in Matabeleland with language books as well as those in some other areas who are forced to learn ChiShona so that they can learn their language.

On a positive note, the new Zimbabwean Constitution of May 2013 has recognised IsiXhosa language and accorded it official recognition status. The question to be answered is whether this declaration will yield any positive results in addressing the plight of amaXhosa in Zimbabwe. The argument is that they should have their language recognised and used in public places including parliament, like other indigenous languages, and, it should also be used as a language for education to the highest level.

The original amaXhosa and amaNdebele culture is expected to have changed due to the two ethnic groups' contact in Mbembesi over such a long period. The current research investigated that shift. The rigid stand on such a practice confirms that amaXhosa are still rooted to their tradition. Pan-African News Wire (2011) contends that the objective of the king's visit to Zimbabwe was to verify if there were genuine amaXhosa living in Zimbabwe. It is hoped that if this visit germinated anything worthwhile, then amaXhosa would have their desires met by the government. This study examined amaXhosa lifestyle, including language, alongside amaNdebele, paying particular attention to any changes in their language from that of South Africa. The researcher believes that the interaction between amaXhosa and amaNdebele in Mbembesi has brought changes in the lifestyles of both peoples; therefore, their coexistence has impacted on their languages and cultures.

The research tried to find out how much language assimilation and cultural practice were involved that have promoted the coexistence of amaXhosa with amaNdebele. The use of IsiXhosa terminology *ibhodlo* meaning a traditional court and the activity itself are a clear indication that they still hold on to the customary practice of settling their differences their way. AmaNdebele also have traditional courts at the chief's homestead to solve community problems.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The researcher would like to believe that what happens in institutions of learning determines what happens in communities. The education system sets the pace for ways of doing things in a nation. Policies are a guide to governance. The Zimbabwe Education Act of 1987, states that the mother tongue should be used as medium of instruction from Grade 1 to 3 and that from Grade 4 English would take over as medium of instruction, while ChiShona and IsiNdebele were learnt as subjects in Mashonaland and Matabeleland, respectively. Where 'minority' languages existed, the Minister was to authorise the teaching of those languages in addition to the specified ones. The policy was revised in 1990 and 1996 and amended in 2006 to allow the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction up to Grade 7. The so-called minority languages, IsiXhosa among them, suffocated under the three dominant languages. By merely residing in

Matabeleland, amaXhosa were automatically forced to learn IsiNdebele. The two ethnic groups have shared a lot of linguistic and cultural experiences in their contact and coexistence though. It was the intention of this research to investigate the impact of their symbiotic relationship on amaXhosa, in addressing oral and written languages in the community and at school, respectively, as well as cultural practices.

### **1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study was to investigate the extent and impact of the symbiotic relationship between amaNdebele and amaXhosa of Zimbabwe on amaXhosa language and culture.

#### **1.3.1 Objectives**

The research was meant to:

- 1.3.1.1** establish how amaXhosa culture has been impacted on by amaNdebele culture through their coexistence
- 1.3.1.2** assess the extent to which IsiXhosa has been impacted on by IsiNdebele
- 1.3.1.3** discover how far IsiXhosa of Mbembesi is similar to IsiXhosa of South Africa
- 1.3.1.4** find out how education policies affected the teaching of IsiXhosa language in Zimbabwe
- 1.3.1.5** to evaluate the extent of the implementation of the Zimbabwean 2013 Constitution in Mbembesi
- 1.3.1.6** suggest ways of promoting harmony (if not any) between amaXhosa and amaNdebele of Mbembesi

#### **1.3.2 Research questions**

##### **The major question**

What is the impact of the symbiotic relationship between amaNdebele and amaXhosa of Zimbabwe on IsiXhosa language and amaXhosa culture?



## **Sub-questions**

- 1.3.2.1** How has amaXhosa culture been impacted on by amaNdebele culture in their coexistence?
- 1.3.2.2** To what extent has IsiXhosa been impacted on by IsiNdebele?
- 1.3.2.3** How far is IsiXhosa of Mbembesi similar to IsiXhosa of South Africa?
- 1.3.2.4** How far have the educational policies affected the teaching of IsiXhosa language in Zimbabwe?
- 1.3.2.5** How far has the Zimbabwean 2013 Constitution been implemented in Mbembesi?
- 1.3.2.6** What strategies can be put in place to promote harmony (if not any) between amaNdebele and amaXhosa living in Mbembesi?

## **1.3.3 Justification of the study**

The reason for carrying out the research was that it could be a ground breaking research as no significant recorded research has been carried out before on IsiXhosa or amaXhosa in Zimbabwe, except on *umguvo* which is their circumcision celebration songs. The other reason is to evaluate the effectiveness of Zimbabwe's new Constitution that has seen IsiXhosa being accorded the status of being officially recognised. Being accorded such status attracts researchers who may want to see the extent and effect of its implementation. It may also contribute to the body of knowledge to scholars and researchers on language contact, language change and endangerment as well as the triglossic situation of the language.

## **1.3.4 Significance of the research**

The research demonstrates how enacted policies have ended up facilitating domination of certain peoples by others. It also plainly exposes how linguistic rights of amaXhosa of Zimbabwe are being violated. Mavesera (2009) posits that language and culture cannot be separated and are interdependent in fostering a sense of confidence enabling communities to interact with nature and produce goods necessary for socio-cultural and economic development. For these reasons, it is imperative to study the relationship between these two ethnic groups in order to

establish how they have impacted on each other in those areas of language and culture. This research is likely to help people to understand the marginalisation of amaXhosa and possibly lead to the development of their language to the same level as others, in line with the 2013 Constitution.

The study may also be of significance to Educational policy makers and implementers on how best they could create opportunities for effective language teaching and development in the country, especially the neglected ones such as IsiXhosa. When education promotes the use of the language to a wider community, even cultural practices are catered for and preserved because language and culture are inseparable as indicated by Mutasa (2006) in Rasila (2014) in his definition of language. The readers of this research may gain knowledge on what obtains in the coexistence of the two ethnic groups in Mbembesi from the information disseminated. The study could promote ways of preserving the language and save it from extinction through developing it to a language of learning up to tertiary level as what obtains in the other indigenous languages.

Other researchers are likely to take a keen interest in the group and carry out studies in the other areas where they are found, especially in Mashonaland where the group is in contact with a different language, which is ChiShona, in order to establish the level of assimilation. Some other researchers may want to study the triglossic situation that amaXhosa of Mbembesi find themselves in, as they are faced with speaking IsiXhosa but learning IsiNdebele and English at school.

#### **1.4 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

**Symbiotic relationship-** Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines a symbiotic relationship as living in symbiosis, or having an interdependent relationship. In this research, amaNdebele and amaXhosa are interdependent in that they take from each other some aspects of their language and culture.

**Culture-** Culture can be defined as a way of life of a group of people as they display behaviour, beliefs and values that they accept and pass along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

**Language-** Mutasa (2006:9) in Rasila (2014) defines language as a carrier of culture, values, ideas and social ideals reflected through images of people struggling with nature and other human beings.

**Multi-lingual-** Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines the term as containing or expressed in many different languages.

**Indigenous language-** Rasila (2014) defines it as a language of original inhabitants of an area - a language which carries the history and culture of a society.

**Language Policy-** Rasila (2014) defines it as a constitution proposed by government to come up with official languages of the country.

**Official language-** Langa (2014) presents Musiyiwa's definition of it as a language that can be used in education, judiciary, business, industry and commerce by the government.

**Standard Language-** Spofana (2011) defines it from Stannon Report as referring to the written, formal form of language that is taught in schools and used in publications and radio.

**Marginalised languages-** Those indigenous languages spoken by a minority of the country in terms of population and their languages being neglected in their development both in educational and public domain.

**Lingua franca-** A language that is common to people who speak different languages.

**Medium of instruction-** It is a language that is used for teaching various subjects at school.

## **1.5 BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature related to the research is reviewed in relation to a funnel approach whereby world perspectives will be presented first, followed by African perspectives, and lastly, Zimbabwean

perspectives. Langa (2014) cites Freddy who revealed that more than half the world's spoken languages are classified as minority languages and about one third which are African face extinction. Nyota (2012) concurs in support of the claim, suggesting that half the existing languages face extinction by 2050. Langa (2014) also indicates that UNESCO claimed, after Zimbabwe's 2013 Constitution, that languages elevated to official status face extinction if no policies are crafted soon to make them official languages for learning in schools, government, commerce and industry. Langa (2014), advocates for the development of learning materials for all the sixteen languages, if they are to be examined.

The researcher agrees to a certain extent because this then calls for the development of IsiXhosa learning material, instead of relying on South African material as is the position at the moment. However, extinction possibility cited by all may not be that fast considering that the peoples speaking the languages would still relate at family and community levels using their indigenous languages. With over one hundred years in existence as pointed out by Minister Obert Mpofu, it may not be possible for IsiXhosa to be extinct even though it may not be given adequate attention in Zimbabwe. A language can only be extinct if the speakers themselves become extinct. In this case, amaXhosa are still found in Mbembesi, speaking their language alongside amaNdebele speaking IsiNdebele.

Gudhlanga and Makaudze (2005) affirm that the French and Germans were busy promoting their languages through Alliance Francais and the German Society alongside their embassies globally, the Chinese and Japanese also elevated their languages through making them mediums of instruction in learning at all levels of education. They went on to say, in South Africa, all indigenous languages have been accorded official status and are languages of instruction up to university level. In the same manner, if Zimbabwe could do likewise, then all languages would be developed to the same level with all things being equal. Mavesera (2009) quotes Mutasa and Negota in Mutasa and Ogutu (2008) who claim that the school is a powerful institution responsible for preparing children and young people for effective participation in the country's social and economic affairs. This can also be realised in amaXhosa community given the chance.

When two languages come into contact, there is always borrowing of both languages' important features into their native languages respectively. This is also true of IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele whereby the two languages have assimilated each other's language due to their contact, either in South Africa as Nguni dialects or in their coexistence in Mbembesi as observed in the provided examples below. Mainly, borrowing is from IsiNdebele as it becomes the superstrate while IsiXhosa becomes substrate due to the scenario created by the 1987 Education Act regarding languages, which saw IsiNdebele being offered as a subject in the schools even to amaXhosa children. These changes were established in the study of IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele as to how their languages have come about.

The Zimbabwe Constitution of May 2013 says, 'The following languages, namely; Chewa, Chibarwe, English, Kalanga, Koisan, Nambya, Ndau, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, Sign Language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda and Xhosa are officially recognised languages of Zimbabwe.

S.A.P. (2012) referring to the Zimbabwean Draft Constitution in Johannesburg indicated that the state and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must ensure that all languages are treated equitably. It was further indicated that the state should promote and advance the use of all languages used in Zimbabwe including Sign Language and must create conditions for the development of those languages. It is the concern of this research to see IsiXhosa being treated independently to its fullest capacity and not to assume that it is catered for under IsiNdebele even though they are similar languages.

Sigobi (2013) argues that language is inseparable from culture and that culture is expressed in language. In her study of amaXhosa and amaSotho school children in South Africa, she confirms that the children speak their mother tongues but learn IsiZulu at school in KwaZulu Natal. In such a scenario, the pupils are not able to express their culture well through using a language not their own. This can also be said of amaXhosa of Zimbabwe who speak IsiXhosa at home and learn IsiNdebele at school. They can never freely and fully express themselves in a second language to them. The research established the extent of the two peoples' impact on each other's language and culture.

An unnamed reporter for Sunday News (29 June 2014) declares that Zimbabwe Indigenous Language Promotion Association (zilpa) had an emotive debate on why indigenous languages in primary schools concentrated on IsiNdebele at the expense of other languages that have been ignored over years. On a similar note, an unnamed correspondent for Editor News (28 July 2010) indicated that the Xhosa community in Mbembesi had threatened to boycott the Constitution outreach program if it was not conducted in their language. They claimed that although there were similarities between IsiNdebele and their language, certain nuances in theirs gave different shades of meanings to some words and expressions. It is crucial to give every language its due recognition in line with the new constitution. The study brought out the relationship between the two languages in terms of structure and usage both in the community and at school, pointing out similarities and differences. The following examples are going to highlight some of the vocabulary that is similar as a result of language contact between the two peoples either in South Africa or Mbembesi:

**Table 1.1 Similar vocabulary 1**

IsiXhosa	IsiNdebele	English
ezi	lezi	these
kwam	kwami	mine
phaya	laphaya	there
loo	lo/lowo	this one
andizange ndiyibone	angizange ngiyibone	I haven't seen it

From the examples above, it is observed that some lexical items are common in their vocabulary due to their contact. Significant differences lie in that IsiXhosa has a double vowel which is not found in IsiNdebele as in *-loo*. There is vowel elision at the end of consonant *-m* as in *-kwam* where IsiNdebele has vowel *-i*. Lastly, there is dropping of initial consonant as in *-ezi* where IsiNdebele has *-l* at the beginning for *-lezi*. The concord *-nd* in IsiXhosa is replaced by *-ng*

in IsiNdebele. The research established changes that have come about especially in the spoken languages.

Cultural practices were also studied to ascertain the similarities and differences. Hlobo (2015) records the practice of *intonjane* - girl initiative, an initiation ceremony marking the end of girlhood and the advent of womanhood. Butler, (2015) quotes Makambe (1982:7) writing about their practice of *umguyo* dance which is circumcision ceremony for boys being initiated from boyhood (*inkwenkwe*) into manhood. There are other nationalities that still practice circumcision such as *Varemba* in ChiShona (*AbaLemba*) in IsiNdebele that are found in some part of Mberengwa, who claim their link with the Jews. It is now globally advocated for, under a campaign for male circumcision to curb the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS.

According to Neethling (2012) naming of children is linked to certain cultural aspects. In both peoples their names are the same. For example, *Thembeke* (the reliable one) is in expectation of that virtue. *Nkosinathi* (the Lord is with us) is in gratitude to God. *Sandile* (we have increased) is expressing the extension of a family. Othering is common in both peoples. An unnamed reporter in othering (2017) narrates that some people are dismissed as less human and less worthy of respect than others. As a result they are then given derogatory names in line with certain issues about them. For instance, an ugly person is called *Mubi* in both languages.

Butler, (2015) states that amaXhosa in Mbembesi are a larger group than amaNdebele. During the interviews, respondents indicated that amaXhosa were outnumbering amaNdebele. One head of school actually indicated that 90% of the pupils in his school were amaXhosa proving that amaXhosa were a larger population than amaNdebele. However, amaXhosa were belittled and called by derogatory names such as amaMfengu the term referring to beggars (*ukufenguza*-to beg) instead of calling them amaXhosa. They were also called *aBathengisi* (sell outs) because of their chief Ndondo Nzimande who uttered loyalty statement to Lord Selbourne, the British High Commissioner, while amaNdebele denied this loyalty according to Makambe, cited by Butler (2015). Powell & Menedian (2017) also indicate that discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, race, class and power differences are also some causes of othering. The

current study ascertained commonality between their cultural practices and those of amaNdebele. In this way, the extent of impacting on each other was established.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.6.1 Theoretical framework**

#### **Dynamic Social Impact: A Theory of the Origins and Evolution of Culture**

The Theory upon which the research is grounded is Dynamic Social Impact Theory (DSIT) which traces the origins and evolution of culture. Harton and Bullock (2007) propounded the theory, suggesting that culture (language included) is created and shaped by local social influences as defined by four phenomena, namely: (a) clustering or regional differences in cultural elements; (b) correlation or emergent associations between elements; (c) consolidation or reduction in variance and (d) continuing diversity. In short, they summarise that cultures can be created and changed from the bottom up through everyday communication with neighbours, friends and co-workers. In other words, the theory also posits that the same group of people, if they split and live at different geographical locations, there arises some divergence in cultural practices. If one part interacts with another different cultural group, their cultures merge and the former group evolves taking some elements from the surrounding group. The two cultural groups that come into contact maintain their distinct or key cultural elements during assimilation.

When the South African amaXhosa are compared with Zimbabwean amaXhosa, it would be noticed that the latter would have evolved and slightly differed from the former or original group. This scenario obtains with amaXhosa of Mbembesi who have evolved from the original amaXhosa of South Africa in terms of language and culture after their interaction with amaNdebele in the area.

Harton and Bullock (2007) quote Cullum and Harton (2007) as saying people have a larger number of interactions with and greater influence on those who live close to them. They further note that as people influence each other on these different elements, they come to be related to each other and new cultures are formed which change over time. The theory



emphasises reciprocity. Finally, they claim that as people influence those closest to them, they tend to be more similar to them than those further away, resulting in spatial distributions of cultural elements and correlation. The two groups of amaXhosa and amaNdebele have impacted each other in their symbiotic relationship. The study unveiled the extent of impacting on each other.

### **1.6.2 Research design**

#### **Qualitative research**

Chiromo (2006) describes a qualitative research as a descriptive and interpretive approach that allows for the investigation of the informal realities that can only be perceived from the inside of a community. The researcher has chosen to employ the qualitative research approach being a case study of amaXhosa and amaNdebele culture sharing groups in Mbembesi. Tuckman (1994) presents a descriptive survey under a qualitative research as involving acquiring information about one or more groups of people, perhaps about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes or previous experiences by asking those questions and tabulating their answers.

A study of their language and culture was done while recording results during interviews. Open ended, structured, semi-structured and unstructured questions were asked in the interviews held with heads of schools, teachers, elders and youths of the community, a Xhosa Cultural Society committee member and a Xhosa activist respectively. Heads of schools were asked semi-structured questions since they were not originally targeted. Teachers were asked sixteen structured questions covering mainly their practice in the school and how they relate with the pupils. Elders were asked thirteen structured questions mainly regarding their cultural life and language. The youths were asked ten structured questions mainly about how they relate with amaNdebele youths. The Xhosa Cultural Society committee member and a Xhosa activist were asked unstructured questions with regards to their contribution to the implementation of the Zimbabwean 2013 Constitution and cultural life respectively. The elders and youths were interviewed as focus groups.

Document analysis was also carried out when the indigenous languages syllabus and teachers' schemes of work as well as pupils' written work were studied. Pupils were given a topic to write a short composition in both IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele, which were then translated into English. This was suitable because it examined the situation as it was on the ground. The documents were meant to display the diglossic situation as they demonstrated their ability to communicate in the two languages.

With regard to research, Denzin and Lincoln (1998) affirm that the phenomena are studied in a natural setting and the researcher can be a participant or a non- participant. The proposed study sought to establish the degree of influence between the cultures of amaXhosa and amaNdebele of Mbembesi and how their symbiotic relationship impacts on amaXhosa in their natural setting. In line with this, the data obtained were the participants' spoken words and written work in their natural setting as also affirmed by Creswell (2016) as the characteristics of the method.

## **1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The researcher explained to the participants why she would be carrying out that research, pointing out that it was purely for academic purposes. She also informed the participants how in the end it could benefit the whole community when the government addresses their plight of marginalisation and segregation in terms of their culture preservation, including language of education in the school. She further indicated that they were to participate freely on a voluntary basis, assuring them of anonymity and safety as letters would be used to identify the participants and not their names. They were told that if they agreed, they were required to sign consent forms. Notwithstanding participants are free to withdraw anytime.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

IsiXhosa is one of the Nguni languages of South Africa. A group of amaXhosa was brought to Zimbabwe by king Mzilikazi during *umfecane* in South Africa and the majority was brought by Cecil John Rhodes from Cape Colony. They settled in Matabeleland areas of Mbembesi in

Umguzha, Fort Rixon and Gwatemba in Filabusi, Motapa in Bubi, Mpolompolo in Nyathi and Matobo district. Some went to Chiwundura, Kennelworth and Lower Gweru in Midlands. Others went to settle at Gutu in Masvingo. Others still are said to have gone to settle as far as Chitomborwizi, Goromonzi, Musengezi and Marirangwe in Mashonaland. They mingled with amaNdebele and maShona, respectively, and exchanged some cultural aspects including language. However, they still maintained some cultural practices including circumcision.

Education policies have not fully addressed their plight as they still teach IsiNdebele and ChiShona at all levels of schooling. Some formerly marginalised indigenous languages have had their statuses raised but IsiXhosa is still far below recognition in education. It was only in the Zimbabwe's 2013 Constitution that it has been officially recognised but the actual implementation remains problematic.

The research established how closely the South African and Zimbabwean IsiXhosa language was related. It also analysed the relationship between amaXhosa and amaNdebele of Mbembesi in their linguistic and cultural aspects and how they have affected each other.

Language specialists claim that language is a unifying force of a nation and multi-lingualism is viewed as a barrier to national integration. Some languages have acted as lingua-franca, for example, English is unifying nationally, and ChiShona is spoken in Mashonaland and IsiNdebele is spoken in Matabeleland where some other languages are found. Marginalised languages have always been disadvantaged in terms of their development.

The theory upon which the research is grounded is Dynamic Social Impact Theory (DSIT) which traces the origins and evolution of culture. A qualitative research paradigm was employed in the research. The study addressed a real life situation where perspectives, assumptions, beliefs and conceptions were addressed. The population and sample of study was the Mbembesi community involving elders and youths, and four primary schools involving heads of schools, teachers and pupils' written work in one school. Community adults and youths as well as teachers were interviewed while documents analysed included the indigenous languages

syllabus, teachers' scheme books and pupils' written work. Results of the findings were triangulated.

## **1.9 SCOPE OF STUDY**

The research was carried out in Mbembesi area in Umguza district in Zimbabwe. The area is in the outskirts of Bulawayo. Data was gathered from four schools solicited from four heads of schools, three teachers, and seven pupils. In the community, those interviewed included twelve elders with the chief among them, ten youths, a Xhosa Cultural Society committee member, a Xhosa activist and one lady. Documents analysed include the indigenous languages syllabus, teachers' scheme books and pupils' written compositions. The major focus of study was on the impact of a symbiotic relationship of amaXhosa and amaNdebele on IsiXhosa language and amaXhosa culture. The research was done under the following sub headings:

### **Chapter 1**

In chapter 1 is found the introduction which covered the background of the problem, statement of the problem, aim and objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the research, justification of the study and some brief literature review. This chapter forms the gist of the whole thesis as it sets the tone of the whole study.

### **Chapter 2**

A detailed literature review related to the topic of study is covered extensively in this chapter. The areas of study include language contact, language change, bilingualism and the importance of mother tongue. The approach is a funnel one whereby the world perspectives are presented first, followed by African perspectives and, lastly, Zimbabwean researches.

### **Chapter 3**

Research Methodology that covered Theoretical Framework presenting the theory that informs or guides the research was discussed in this chapter. A research design that was employed is qualitative being a case study. The population and sample as well as research instruments that were used in carrying out the study are also found in this chapter. Purposive sampling was used

in picking participants for the study. The instruments used for data gathering were the interviews and document analysis of schemes of work and pupils' written compositions in the two indigenous languages. Ethical consideration was observed.

#### **Chapter 4**

Presentation and discussion of research findings and analysis were done in this chapter. The research touched on issues related to how education policies have affected IsiXhosa usage in the schools, community and public life in general. The results from the instruments used were triangulated to come up with a consolidated piece of work. This is the chapter that addressed the research questions outlined in chapter 1. Indeed, the two ethnic groups have impacted on each other with regards to their languages and cultures. It was discovered that there is a slight difference between IsiXhosa of Mbembesi and that of South Africa which is standard Xhosa.

#### **Chapter 5**

Conclusion to the whole research area under study and recommendations were presented in this chapter. A summary of all the work in all the chapters was given and proposed solutions to the challenges were laid down. Areas for further researches were also highlighted in this chapter. Some other researchers might be interested in a study of amaXhosa in Mashonaland areas as well as the triglossic situation that amaXhosa find themselves in.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter reviews literature related to the topic of study adopting a funnel approach that is, looking at global level, African, and Zimbabwean contexts. Since literature review largely serves to justify the particular topic, the selection of method demonstrates that this research contributes something new (Hart, 1999). This chapter also intends to demonstrate gaps and how this work seeks to help fill them. That way, the researcher would be demonstrating full knowledge of the particular field of study, including the relevant theories, key variables and phenomena and its methods and history (Randolph, 2002).

The separate treatment of language contact and cultures in contact is merely for convenience and improved clarity in this study, otherwise language contact is part of cultures in contact. While language itself is an essential ingredient of culture and primarily the one that carries culture, this view broadens the lens of viewing culture. In addition, a society's culture is expressed through its literature, art, architecture, dress, food, entertainment and many other forms. (Muzenda & Sibanda, 2013). Various writers have conceptualised culture and common features run through their definitions.

Perhaps at this stage it is crucial to review these characteristics as given by (Bradie, 2017) as follows:

- (a) Culture is communal in that it is passed on from one social unit to another.
- (b) Because it gives the community identity, individuals are pressured to conformity.
- (c) Culture is not inborn; it is acquired through a process of socialisation as people interact in everyday activities.
- (d) Culture is inherited from generation to generation, hence it is cumulative. Posterity builds on what is left behind by previous generations.
- (e) Culture enables human beings to survive through the use of methods and techniques devised by previous generations.

- (f) Culture is a product of the material conditions of the people as they produce their means of livelihood.

From these features one realises that while we normally take culture for granted, it is, and however, not inborn but is learnt. In addition, culture shapes and influences how we see things. Culture is the foundation on which social institutions are built. By institutions, it is meant minds, ideas, sensibilities, values and principles that form the content of organisations. Culture is also purposeful as each culture has its operative value systems and behaviour patterns it has generated for the achievement of its goal. Culture, therefore, includes all the common knowledge and practices of a given group. It can also be defined as that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs and religious beliefs, myths and taboos, art, morals, customs, and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society (Bradie, 2017).

Some writers show that cultural traits or customs and beliefs are not acquired in any particular logical manner. Culture is therefore, embedded in the mind and behaviour system of an individual throughout life. Language is one aspect that demonstrates that link with the mind. We already noted that language is a carrier of culture, since language is a cultural asset for the transmission of knowledge and information. It is actually difficult to separate culture from language.

## **2.2 WORLD PERSPECTIVES**

Langa (2014) records Freddy having said studies reveal that there are 5 000-7 000 spoken languages in the world, of which 4 000-5 000 are classified as minority languages and more than 2 500 are said to be in danger of extinction. 32% of the languages under threat are African. Nyota (2012) in support of the claim notes that scholars have unveiled shocking statistics that half the existing languages face extinction by 2050.

In the researcher's view, the languages that have always been referred as minority languages have their own speakers that never view their languages as minor but as languages in their own right. Perhaps, their languages can become extinct if they are totally ignored by their countries' language policies and if the speakers themselves become extinct. In the case of the people

under study, (amaXhosa), though their language is referred to as minor, as long as they use their language in their community it will survive and to them it is a major language.

Mavesera (2009) quotes Mutasa (2004) as observing that Zimbabwe has localised public 'O' Level examinations but without localising the medium of instruction. Mavesera (2009) goes on to quote Yohannes (2009) who conducted a study in Ethiopia and strongly proving the advantage of using mother tongue as the language of instruction in teaching Mathematics and Science subjects in upper primary schools. In support of the affirmations, the current researcher is persuaded to believe that using one's indigenous language in education has far reaching positive effects to the user. Mavesera (2009) also quotes Mutasa and Negota in Mutasa and Ogutu (2008) who claim that the school is a powerful institution responsible for preparing children and young people for effective participation in the country's social and economic affairs.

This can also be realised in amaXhosa community of Mbembesi if given the chance to use their language from informal education at home to formal education at school. Socialisation starts in the home, extended to the school. Therefore, the language used at home, when carried to the school has far reaching effects in the learning process. Learners' performance can be far enhanced as compared to what they experience at the moment where they are not using their indigenous language.

An unnamed correspondent (2016) on language contact presents a type called delayed effect contact where there is a gradual penetration due to prolonged exposure to another language by large bilingual sections of a community. The result is said to be a low level influence where speech habits migrate from one language to another. The correspondent affirms that the French's contact with the Celtic could have resulted in the emergence of *-y* in French that was borrowed from Celtic, making a shift from French original *-u* that resulted from the change in pronunciation.

This situation is also realised in IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele whereby the two languages have assimilated each other's language due to their contact, either in South Africa as Nguni dialects or in their coexistence in Mbembesi as observed in the examples below. In such a situation,



borrowing takes place in the two languages without necessarily affecting the initial base structures of languages in question.

Code-switching in the two languages in contact is also experienced in the speeches of both adults and children. Language is mainly transmitted during socialisation of children when they grow up, starting from their family going to schooling institution up to a larger community and even in the media they come across on their own. Mainly, borrowing in this study is from IsiNdebele as it becomes the superstrate while IsiXhosa becomes substrate due to the scenario created by the 1987 Education Policy on languages which saw IsiNdebele being offered as a subject in all the schools in Matabeleland and even to amaXhosa children.

Royneland (1997) affirms that French, German and English are regarded as the most important languages worldwide. He further observes that some languages are valued even beyond their national borders, while not being recognised for educational or other public purposes within their own areas of concentration. This is true of IsiXhosa of Mbembesi that is recognised in South Africa but not recognised in Zimbabwe. He elaborates on the issue as he claims that many minority languages, both indigenous and non-indigenous, are not recognised either as official or working languages, even though some have larger numbers of speakers than do the national languages.

It is realised that the issue of language status counts more than the number of speakers in order to gain recognition. (Royneland, 1997), concludes by noting that with national language policy, some indigenous languages are more equal than others, evident in the promotion of one language and the suppression of others. This is observed in the Zimbabwean situation whereby ChiShona and IsiNdebele have been made more equal than the other indigenous languages of the country (IsiXhosa included) and their development promoted while others have been suppressed. It is hoped that with the advent of the 2013 Constitution, the formally marginalised indigenous languages could also have their statuses raised.

Royneland (1997) claims that human communities are always in contact with other groups and connected to them economically or socially through exchange of goods, knowledge and

marriage partners. It is against this background that this study will look at amaNdebele and amaXhosa communities in Mbembesi in terms of their coexistence as they share their lives through exchange of their languages and cultures. The changes will be evident in the study of IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele to establish how their languages have changed. Intermarriage has also occurred whereby amaXhosa women have been married by amaNdebele men affecting their cultural practices as well.

According to *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (Crystal 2006:102) language contact is a term used in sociolinguistics to refer to a situation of geographical continuity or close social proximity (and thus of mutual influence) between languages or dialects. The result of contact situations can be seen linguistically, in the growth of loan words, patterns of phonological and grammatical change, mixed forms of language (such as creoles and pidgins) and general increase in bilingualism of various kinds. Crystal (2006) further says, in a restricted sense, languages are said to be in contact; if they are used alternatively by the same person, that is, bilinguals. The researcher would confidently claim that amaXhosa of Mbembesi are bilingual in IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele as a result of such contact.

Nkomo and Maseko (2017) quote Phillipson (1997:238) who said, “....linguistic imperialism is a theoretical construct, devised to account for linguistic hierarchisation, to address issues of why some languages come to be used more and others less, what structures and ideologies facilitate such processes ....” On the same issue, they further quote a Ghanaian sociolinguist Ansre (1979:12) who describes linguistic imperialism as, “The phenomenon in which the minds and lives of speakers of a language are dominated by another language to the point where they believe that they can and should use only that foreign language when it comes to transactions dealing with more advanced aspects of life such as education, philosophy, literature, governments and the administration of justice”. They profess linguistic imperialism to be a subtype of cultural imperialism quoting Phillipson, (1992:51). The idea in the book is that there is domination and exploitation, unequal rights to language use which are internalised and accepted as normal by both parties. It is a similar scenario with IsiXhosa that is dominated by IsiNdebele and ChiShona among the indigenous languages. By so doing, the language becomes

paralysed when it comes to national development issues. It is the researcher's hope that this research will be an eye opener to the language policy makers that this language needs serious attention.

Simango (2009) notes that, in the developed world, education in the mother tongue is not only considered normal but it is also taken for granted. However, in the developing or underdeveloped world, mother tongue education is considered to a certain extent with some dominant languages but neglected in others. The language under study falls under the last scenario where it is not used as a language for education. It is the concern of the researcher to explore the circumstances under such treatment of the language.

While the research focus is on the impact of the relationship between amaNdebele and amaXhosa, it is believed that could only be understood from appreciating the global cultural context. Both cultures of amaNdebele and amaXhosa have been subjected to imperialist conquest and colonialism. Both cultural communities underwent drastic social changes as a new religion, that is, Christianity was introduced in such a way that it sought to displace indigenous customs, traditions, beliefs and practices that were considered heathen. The western education and its values also sought to transform the indigenous Africans in the image of their colonisers, hence, the denigration of African languages and over valuing of the utility of European languages. Colonialism changed the economic system as Africans became the labour force and could not own their land any more, an issue that both amaNdebele and amaXhosa suffered. But colonialism did not alter political and economic world view of amaXhosa and amaNdebele, but most significantly the cultural landscape: dress, food, marriage and socialisation of children, wedding ceremonies and burial rituals among others.

It is therefore, instructive that while for the convenience of academic analysis we separate language and culture, in their essence, the two are inseparable. Similarly, the language and culture of amaXhosa are entwined and what affects one simultaneously affects the other. Therefore, in this study, it would not suffice to interrogate customs, religious or cultural practices of amaXhosa and amaNdebele without unmasking the effects of colonial and global culture that permeates other cultures, especially of African communities. Notwithstanding that

cultures are dynamic and have always been, however, the pervasive nature of global culture becomes significant for particular attention.

### **2.3 AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES**

In Africa in general, there is a general slackening of the promotion and preservation of indigenous languages and cultures. This has been engineered by the elitist and foreign created type of education that prescribed the foreign languages as languages of education (medium of instruction) at the expense of indigenous ones. Some scholars note that with increased globalisation, indigenous languages are under even greater threat than they were under colonisation, showing that the risk for African cultures is even higher now well after the colonial assault. Therefore, global culture or global village is perceived as a greater threat to languages and cultures of the weaker nations and peoples of the South. With improvement in technology, especially media and communication, the culture of the European capitals such as Paris, London or New York are spread to the rest of Africa as mass culture in the form of music, fashion and food. It has been referred to as the coca cola culture or Macdonaldisation of culture as the American burger is portrayed as ideal food for the rest of the youths of the world who consume the culture through videos, television and social media (Muzenda and Sibanda, 2013).

While the colonial relations between Africa and the West have been severed, the imperialist relations have been retained through globalisation. Actually, the relation between Africa and the West is that of imperialism where one society dominates the other. Its mechanism is essentially exploitation, penetration, fragmentation and marginalisation. Also, linguistic imperialism as a distinct form of imperialism permeates all types of imperialism because language is a medium of communication and carries content too. Linguistic imperialism is a primary component of cultural imperialism. Linguistic imperialism is central to social imperialism which transmits norms of behaviour.

Gxilishe (2009) in his paper on Afrikaans, African languages and indigenous knowledge systems, looked at the widening inequalities in fields of science, education and technology in respect of African languages; he says African languages have not been used for economic value or higher

functions. In addition, he argues that the value of a language is seen in that through it people convey ideas, knowledge, value systems, aspirations, beliefs, history and identity. It is apparent that one's language carries culture which is the whole person. This is in support of Mutasa (2006) in his article on *Decolonising African Languages in the literary way*, when he notes that, "our language is a reflection of ourselves". This was said at the opening of Cultural Day celebration and book launch at UNISA. (Mutasa 2006; Alexander 2005) agree that ".....losing a language will core out a nation and reduce it to a nation without a heart and soul".

The preceding statements all point to the fact that a people's language is as vital as the people themselves. Mutasa (2006) further asserts that acculturation is done through indigenous language as people disseminate accumulated knowledge, wisdom and values and assimilate new ideas into existing cognitive structure. It goes without saying that language plays a crucial role in the academic field.

Gxilishe (2009) postulates that South Africa's 1994 multilingualism policy promoted the use of indigenous languages. Mutasa (2008) postulates that the 1994 independence language policy saw the declaration of eleven (11) official languages that the constitution accorded them official status at national and provincial levels, and conditions were created for their promotion and development. Gudhlanga and Makaude (2005) went on to observe that in South Africa all indigenous languages have been accorded official status and languages of instruction up to university level.

In the same manner, if Zimbabwe could do likewise, then all languages including IsiXhosa would be developed to the same level, all things being equal. In such a way, the speakers of those indigenous languages would feel recognised and would also freely participate in national events and enjoy disseminations of all kinds of information informally and formally in the institutions of learning. Learning materials would be developed to suit the functions of those languages. Technological advances would also accommodate those languages as long as the speakers of those indigenous languages were willing to make a change.

Mutasa (2008) citing Bamgbose (1991:111) postulates that language policies in Africa, no matter how good they are, are characterised by, among other aspects, ".....declaration

without implementation". Mutasa (2008) further notes that information is accessed from grassroots in the languages people are proficient in. On the same issue, Mutasa (2015) quotes Dialla (2011) who established that if students learn their own languages as subjects and learn through medium of their own languages, "there is cultural and linguistic reinforcement in the home" and other domains. In line with language and culture, Mutasa (2015) also quoted Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore's speech in 1978 where it is said, "A person who gets deculturised, who loses his language, loses his identity and self-confidence". Mutasa (2015) lastly observes that speakers of indigenous African languages have their own value systems embedded in their languages; therefore, these values are worth upholding.

The ideas in the above paragraph advocate for a strong recognition and upliftment of African languages for they form the gist of the people's culture. Likewise, amaXhosa of Mbembesi together with all other indigenous languages of Zimbabwe ought to be used by their speakers to create their own world. It was hoped that the research would unveil ways of strengthening the language and culture of amaXhosa of Mbembesi in order to participate fully in matters pertaining to their livelihood.

Mavesera (2009) goes on to quote Yohannes (2009) who conducted a study in Ethiopia strongly proving the advantage of using mother tongue as the language of instruction in teaching Mathematics and Science subjects in upper primary schools. In support of the affirmations, the current researcher is persuaded to believe that using one's indigenous language in education has far reaching effects to the user. Mavesera (2009) also quotes Mutasa and Negota in Mutasa and Ogutu (2008) who claim that the school is a powerful institution responsible for preparing children and young people for effective participation in the country's social and economic affairs. This can also be realised in amaXhosa community if given the chance.

Viriri (2011) declares that Afro-centrism is now emphasised in order for people to use their languages to view their world. Khanyile (2011) stresses that South Africa's eleven official languages (most being African) are taught up to university level. The two affirmations are a very welcome development that seeks to promote identity maintenance through language and culture preservation. It is encouraged that all African languages be recognised and developed to

benefit their users. As long as amaXhosa learn IsiNdebele at school the above claims will not be realised. Being officially recognised should make it operate in all domains of life.

Makanda (2009) quotes the 1986 OAU Language Plan of Action for Africa, cited by Mutasa (2003) showing one of its objectives as encouraging the use of African languages as vehicles of instruction at all levels. This has been implemented in some languages but not in others such as IsiXhosa in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe Education Policy Amended in 2006 allowed teachers to teach in mother tongue at primary up to Grade 7. However, this did not materialise for IsiXhosa language in the schools. It is sad to note that the language was not being offered as a school subject since the 1931 Doke recommendation until 2013 when it was offered at ECD and in Grade 1 and in progression until 2015 in a formal way but abandoned along the way in 2016.

Cultural practices were also studied to ascertain the level of cultural impact on the two peoples under study in the Mbembesi community. One distinct cultural practice of amaXhosa is the practice of circumcision. An unnamed reporter on SAHO (2016) records the practice of female circumcision (*intonjane*-girl initiation). It is revealed that there is no actual surgical operation on the girls as it is done on the boys' circumcision. Butler (2015) quotes Makambe (1982:7) writing about amaXhosa practice of *umguyo* dance which is a circumcision ceremony for boys between eighteen and twenty years of age, declares that they would be initiated from boyhood (*ubukhwenkwe*) into manhood. There are many other nationalities that still practice circumcision. It is now globally advocated for, under a campaign for male circumcision to curb the spread of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and AIDS.

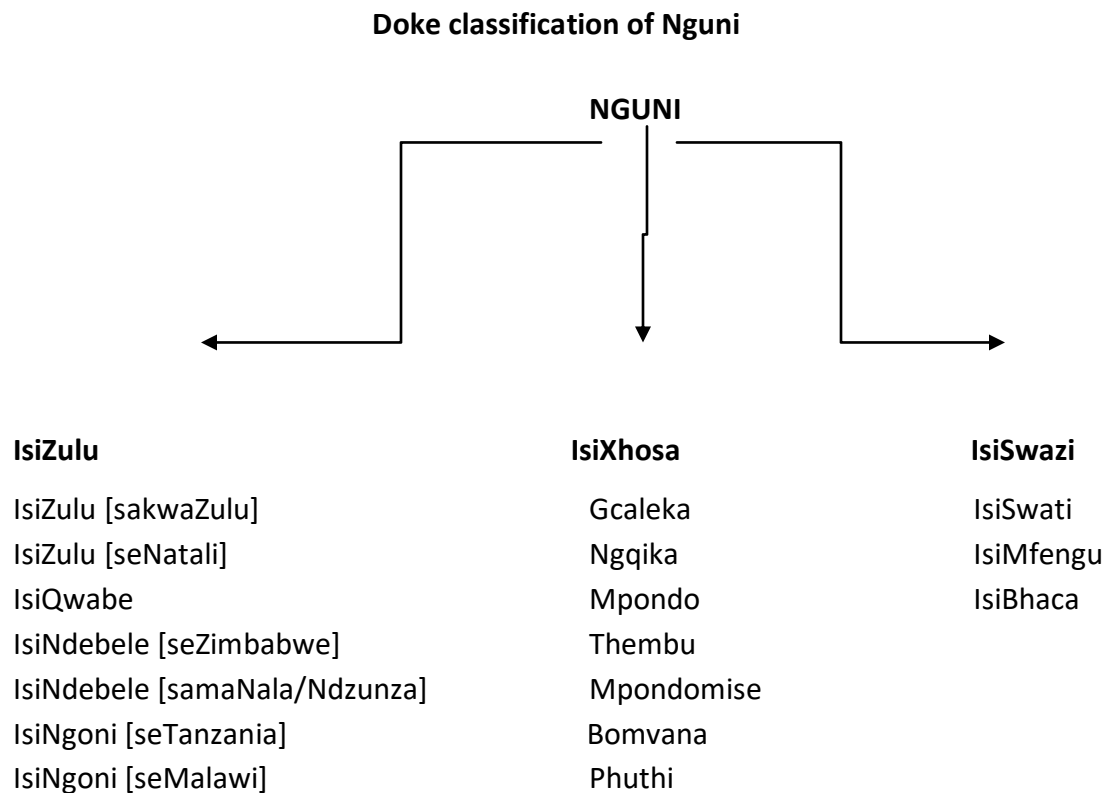
AmaXhosa are encouraged to proudly continue observing their cultural traditions as a mark of their identity. Other such practices indicated by the website include *bravura* and bead works which are ornaments. There are other practices that are common to both peoples. These include, women wearing headdress from the newly married up to older women. They are the ones that till the land and grow crops while men, who are polygamous, get involved in issues of building. Women are said to be the main diviners. Notwithstanding this, amaNdebele have men as the main diviners. It would appear that there are some people who still visit traditional

healers for treatment. A human being naturally wants to depend on an invisible force for his or her life. So diviners tell them about the unseen.

Coming to language itself, the concept of bilingualism per se becomes problematic in a situation like IsiNdebele and IsiXhosa which are both Nguni and are mutually intelligible. Nonetheless, for our understanding of languages in contact, the key issues such as phonological and grammatical changes or loan words are noted. The issue of their similarity and mutual intelligibility should be factored in the context.

Below is how Doke (1954) has classified Nguni varieties with IsiXhosa sub-dialects:

**Figure 2.1 Doke classification**



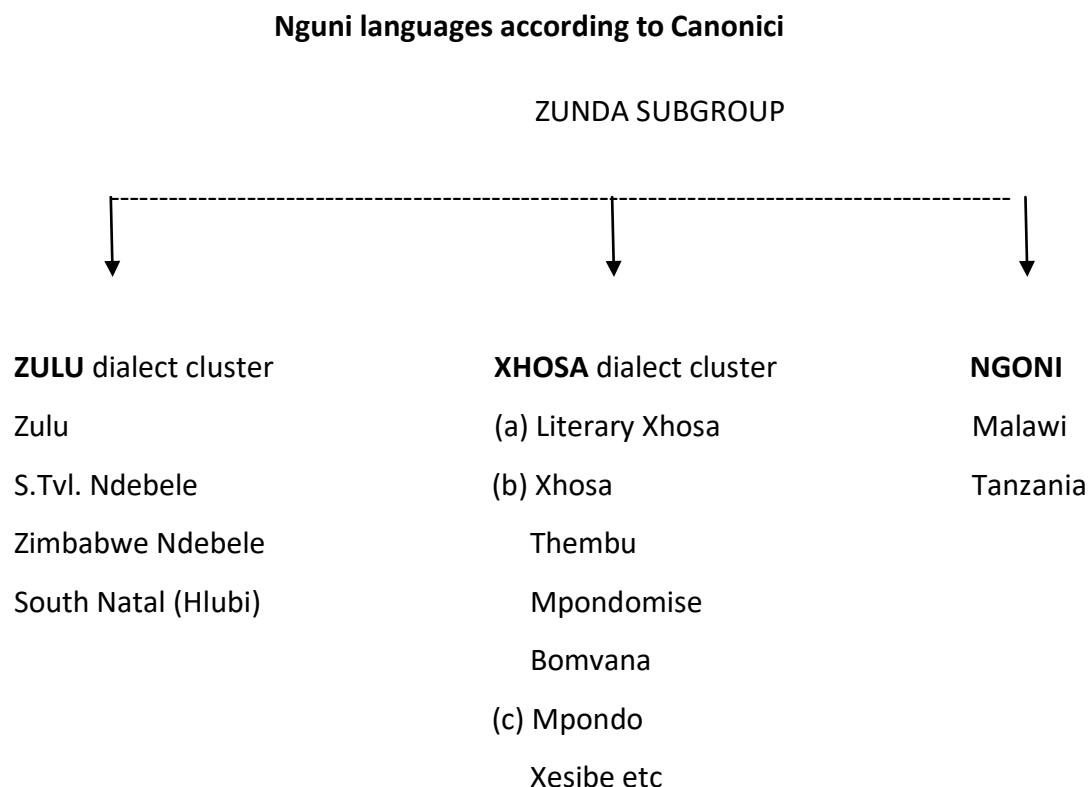
According to Doke (1954) what constitutes standard IsiXhosa is made up of isiGcaleka, IsiNgqika, IsiMpondo, IsiThembu, IsiMpondomise, IsiBomvana and IsiPhuthi. But Canonici describes the varieties differently and even places IsiHlubi under IsiZulu and not IsiXhosa.



Therefore, this study tried to establish which particular variety of IsiXhosa is spoken in Mbembesi and how divergent it is from the South African counterparts.

Below is Canonici (1994)'s classification of Nguni languages:

**Figure 2.2 Canonici classification**



So far the *Greater Dictionary of Xhosa* (1989) covers comprehensively some of the dialectal variations in IsiXhosa. Some works that have some aspects on IsiXhosa include *Lexicographic Work in Xhosa*. However, all these works do not cover IsiXhosa spoken in Zimbabwe which this study focuses on. The gap in classification is aptly filled by Guthrie (1948, 1967-71). On issues of orthography, apart from Hadebe (2006) on IsiNdebele, the *IsiXhosa Terminology and Orthography* (1976) is still useful for IsiXhosa. Notwithstanding, these valuable works do not, however, compare IsiXhosa of Mbembesi and IsiNdebele as this research does.

The affinity of IsiXhosa to IsiNdebele could trigger another reaction in a language contact which so far has not been reached. There are cases where a speech community deliberately distances

its language from a neighbouring language. This would be a contact-induced language change but without diffusion. Perhaps, due to previous political conflicts between the IsiZulu speaking and the IsiXhosa speaking peoples, there are tendencies of deliberate distancing between the two languages especially in term creation and development. This study would investigate whether IsiXhosa in the Zimbabwean context would react the same way against the dominant IsiNdebele, or whether the opposite is obtaining.

From an unnamed author (2018) it is claimed that IsiXhosa employs Latin alphabet style. It is found that fifteen (15) click sounds have been borrowed from Khoi-Khoi and San languages of South Africa. There are three (3) primary click consonants, namely; palatal click (q), dental click (c), lateral click (x) and five (5) vowels- a, e, i, o, u. The same primary consonants are found in IsiNdebele.

In Africa, however, as has been alluded to, in the earlier work above, mother tongue education is anathema. The mother tongue does not only provide the means of self-identity (of individuals and groups in society) but it also provides the means of transmitting cultural knowledge from one generation to the next (Batibo, 2005; Simango, 2009).

Although linguists and educationists have shown the value of mother tongue instruction, not much has changed in Africa in general and in Zimbabwe in particular. Simango (2009) writes that the policies are in various ways designed to elevate European languages above African languages. Wolf (2002:132) notes that, 'indigenous African languages are practically never considered a value in them, but rather as a necessary evil before changing over to the European official language as soon as possible'. The same could be said of IsiXhosa in that its introduction in schools in Mbembesi does not mean amaXhosa children would use it as medium of learning but merely as preparatory for English.

Another issue in language policy with particular focus on education relates to language standardisation. One of the lasting legacies of colonial rule is the confusing sociolinguistic situation in independent Africa where mutually intelligible varieties have been treated as separate and different languages. As already alluded to, IsiXhosa, IsiNdebele, IsiSwati and

IsiZulu are linguistically speaking a single language. The variation is typically dialectal, but with different orthographies, the differences appear marked.

Hadebe (2006) states that currently there are efforts of harmonising Nguni languages quoting (Khumalo, 2003; Sibanda & Zindela, 2003; Kwetana, 2003) especially in orthography to enhance development of literature and sharing the limited resources. The study of IsiXhosa in the Zimbabwean context should of necessity, therefore, factor the harmonisation projects currently taking place.

## **2.4 ZIMBABWEAN VIEWS**

Since IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele are both Nguni languages, their linguistic affinity is a given. However, their mutual interference in the Zimbabwean context remains largely conjectural. Language studies in Zimbabwe have not focused on the relationship between the two languages, except the recent doctoral thesis by Kunju (2017) entitled *IsiXhosa ulwimi lwabantu abangesonininzi eZimbabwe: Ukuphila nokulondolozwa kwaso* (IsiXhosa as a minority language in Zimbabwe: survival and maintenance). The Rhodes University's new language policy allows students to use their mother tongue for learning. Apart from a shared but distant linguistic origin, the two groups are relatively recent arrivals in Zimbabwe and have come to share the same territory mainly in Matabeleland. For almost a century, the amaXhosa and amaNdebele have lived together as communities within Umguza district of Matabeleland North. This study, therefore, unravels the tapestry of linguistic and cultural interface of the two communities within the Zimbabwean socio-political and linguistic context.

First, it is important to contextualize IsiXhosa within the Zimbabwean language situation before focusing on both language and culture contact, respectively. The chapter further gives a comparison of linguistic features of IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele. The contextual analysis of the literature review should reveal language planning and policy issues, especially as they have affected and continue to affect the learning and teaching of IsiXhosa in the schools.

Now we assess IsiXhosa in the overall Zimbabwe language situation. Since the research partly focuses on the impact on IsiXhosa through the relationship of the two communities of

amaXhosa and amaNdebele, it is, therefore, apparent to speak of aspects of languages in contact. Actually, to say languages in contact would be a misnomer as it is the speakers of those languages that would be in contact. The amaXhosa and amaNdebele communities are in contact and hence by extension their respective languages IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele. Notably, language contact is expected every time two or more groups of speakers meet, and thus language contact implies as much motion of people as transfer of languages. The perspective draws us to a conceptualisation of languages as more than simply self-contained linguistic systems but, in addition, as reflecting the socio-cultural dynamics of their environment.

Interestingly, the IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele linguistic situation is complicated by a number of factors including migration, colonial contact, and the education system and post-independence policies. However, there has not been a comprehensive study on this linguistic reality. Studies in language contact set that languages do not develop independently from other languages, and that the outcomes of language contact result from adaptive answers of linguistic systems. Also, language contact studies offer the opportunity of studying the interaction of social motivations and linguistic factors in the process of language change and the case of IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele are not an exception.

As such, one observes that every language has the right to be used in all spheres of life. Notwithstanding the fact that in Mbembesi amaXhosa are few as compared to amaNdebele, they still have the right to access information from the grassroots in their own language in all domains of their lives. It is hoped that the 2013 Constitution will address the plight of amaXhosa in respect of their language usage in public institutions and all domains of life instead of using IsiNdebele that is not their indigenous language. That way, they will feel that they are complete individuals. This research will unveil how far the 2013 Constitution has addressed the concerns of the amaXhosa people of Mbembesi with regards to the use of their language.

Zimbabwe is equally a multilingual nation which has challenges in the promotion and development of all the languages. The 2013 Zimbabwe Constitution officially recognises sixteen (16) languages but the situation on the ground does not show favourable results for some of them, including IsiXhosa in which IsiNdebele dominates it. Mutasa (2008) asserts that languages

are regarded as separate languages in their own right and that their promotion leads to their revival and survival. This should be true of IsiXhosa spoken in Mbembesi that should be regarded as an autonomous language for it to survive since it is for a small population.

An earlier claim by UNESCO after Zimbabwe's 2013 Constitution has been that languages not elevated to be official face extinction if policies are not crafted soon to make them official languages for learning in schools, government, commerce and industry. This claim was supported by Langa (2014) who advocates for the development of learning materials for all the sixteen languages if they are to be examined. It is high time Zimbabwean amaXhosa produced their own materials, according to how they speak the language, which is now slightly different from the South African IsiXhosa language. IsiXhosa learning materials that come from South Africa as is the position at the moment is not the real solution. However, the researcher does not believe that the language can be extinct since it is spoken in the community extensively and also since Obert Mpofu indicated that it has been in existence in Zimbabwe for more than hundred years.

While Hachipola (1998) made a significant contribution to the understanding of the linguistic landscape in Zimbabwe in general and of what were then known as minority languages in particular, however, not much has been covered on IsiXhosa. Actually, IsiXhosa is one of the languages that received minimum attention of at least a page while languages such as TjiKalanga had six (6) pages and ChiTonga had at least ten (10) pages. Even that page dedicated to IsiXhosa is dominated by the usual discussion on the land issue associated with the Mbembesi community and Cecil John Rhodes' promises.

Notwithstanding, Hachipola makes instructive comment on the future of IsiXhosa in Zimbabwe as a language that should have disappeared in the country yet still survives. Hachipola (1998:76) notes that:

*Xhosa has remained intact although it is spoken by few people because the community is closely knit and the people continue to teach their children to speak their language. Strong ethnic identity has helped to preserve the language and culture of this community which could*

*have disappeared a long time ago.*

Actually, the above cited views reveal yet another issue about IsiXhosa within Zimbabwe's linguistic landscape. Prior to the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe, languages in Zimbabwe dating from pre-Independence era were ordered hierarchically. Even what were known then as minority languages excluded some marginalised languages such as IsiXhosa. In that way Hachipola (1998) talked of official and unofficial minority languages with IsiXhosa in the latter category. While the designation "minority" was demeaning and derogatory enough, IsiXhosa could not even qualify to be minority. The then so-called minority languages in the Matabeleland region formed an association VESOTOKA (Venda, Sotho, Tonga and Kalanga) commonly referred to simply as VESOTOKA but excluded IsiXhosa from that consortium. It could be argued that perhaps even "minority" communities did not feel that amaXhosa community was equally deserving of membership status.

Still on that note, Sibanda (2016) who wrote a reference manual for indigenous language teachers in Matabeleland wrote on IsiNdebele, TjiKalanga, SeSotho, TshiVenda, ChiTonga and ChiNambya but not on IsiXhosa. There is still a gap in researching on IsiXhosa to come up with comprehensive work. It is the aim of this study to try and come up with what may contribute to knowledge about IsiXhosa and amaXhosa purse.

A brief outline of Zimbabwe's language situation with particular reference to Matabeleland is given by Hadebe (2006) although his interest was on IsiNdebele. A notable and relevant observation by Hadebe is the hierarchy of languages in Zimbabwe with English at the apex followed by ChiShona and IsiNdebele while the rest follow in that packing order. The Zimbabwe Constitution of May 2013 states, 'The following languages namely Chewa, Chibarwe, English, Kalanga, Koisan, Nambya, Ndau, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, Sign Language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda and Xhosa are officially recognised languages of Zimbabwe. Nkomo and Maseko (2017) affirm that the 2013 Constitution marked an elevation of formally marginalised languages of Zimbabwe. It is hoped that the constitution will raise the status of IsiXhosa to a level that other indigenous languages have reached.

While this position of language hierarchies could have been changed officially by the provisions of the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe, the reality on the ground is yet to match the official proclamations. Two further observations could be made from Hadebe (2006). First are attitudes to language policies and second are IsiZulu and IsiNdebele links. In the researcher's view, both these issues have relevance to the IsiXhosa situation.

Hadebe (2006) argues that IsiNdebele is in essence a minority language in Zimbabwe lacking numerical superiority or political prestige enjoyed by ChiShona. He further reveals how speakers of IsiNdebele have previously perceived the promotion of "minority" languages as an attempt by the government to undermine their language in Matabeleland. Of course, the languages referred to did not include IsiXhosa since it has been noted that it had not been recognised then as a "minority" language. There is so far no research that has established IsiNdebele speakers' attitudes to the promotion of previously marginalised languages in Matabeleland that includes IsiXhosa. Such a study could have a bearing on the teaching of IsiXhosa in schools since the Constitution now provides for. It is imperative for this research to interrogate attitude issues as they are important in determining whether language policies are adhered to or not.

A visit to Mbembesi on Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup> of February 2018 revealed a situation about IsiXhosa in the education arena. The researcher had an interview with Chief Dumisani Ndondo who disclosed that, *In the early 70s IsiXhosa was being learnt in the schools and IsiNdebele was not learnt, for example at Mqwashwini Primary School. IsiXhosa examinations were being written up to Standard Six (6). It was only after the Doke recommendation of 1931 that ChiShona was taught in Mashonaland and IsiNdebele in Matabeleland which saw IsiXhosa disappearing from the school curriculum. AmaXhosa teachers resigned from the teaching service in the likes of Rev Nyilika, Mrs Ndondo and Mr Mthongana who are now all late.* It is noted that IsiXhosa had been formally re-introduced in schools from Grade One (1) in 2013 to 2015. Regrettably, the teaching of isiXhosa was abandoned in 2016. There was hope of taking it to the heights like all other indigenous languages who have taken strides even up to A Level like ChiTonga and as far

as the university as with the mentioned formally marginalised languages of Zimbabwe. Sadly, IsiXhosa is not examined at any level, making the policy ineffective.

Dube (2014) reports in Washington D C that the Zimbabwean Xhosa community was seeking twenty (20) million dollars for the construction of a secondary school to empower locals with education and preserve their vanishing language. It is said to be vanishing because it is not learnt at high school and also not given attention at primary school. Dube (2014) reports that amaXhosa prince Macleod Tshawe told VOA Studio 7 that the government fully backed the project since the new Constitution recognises IsiXhosa as among Zimbabwe's sixteen officially recognised languages. He went further note that the school would provide lessons from Form 1-6 which is a project that had also received support from King Zwelonke. In his speech, Tshawe actually said, *We are happy that we have received a lot of support from the Zimbabwean government and King Zwelonke. This project will go a long way in preserving our culture and empowering local people with good education.* It is surprising that since the declaration in 2014 there is still no progress. One wonders why it has taken so long to get started with so much support in place. It is hoped that this research will make recommendations that may improve the livelihoods of amaXhosa of Mbembesi.

Katongomara (2016) on 29 June 2014 Sunday News declared that Zimbabwe Indigenous Language Promotion Association (ZILPA) had an emotive debate why indigenous languages in primary schools concentrated on IsiNdebele at the expense of other languages that have been ignored over years. On a similar note, an unnamed correspondent of Editor News (28 July 2010) indicated that the amaXhosa community in Mbembesi threatened to boycott the Constitution outreach program if it was not conducted in their language. They claimed that although there were similarities between IsiNdebele and their language, certain nuances in theirs gave different shades of meanings to some words and expressions. Indeed, there are some differences in these two languages that should make each language be treated separately. It is crucial to give every language its due recognition in line with the new Constitution. The government should create conditions for the promotion and development of IsiXhosa. It is hoped that it will not be a mere talk without implementation.



The second issue of interest raised by Hadebe (2006) is that perhaps IsiNdebele survives on its relationship with IsiZulu. Actually, IsiZulu texts are still used in teaching IsiNdebele grammar, novels, poetry and cultural studies. According to Hadebe (2006:62):

*Although the status of IsiNdebele might seem precarious in the country, regionally the language enjoys higher status among other African languages, as it is one of the Nguni languages (together with Zulu, Xhosa, Swati and S.A. Ndebele) which are spoken by more than 40 million people in South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. It is yet to be seen what the impact will be in Zimbabwean Ndebele as all other Nguni languages have been promoted into official status in South Africa and Swaziland respectively.*

What has been observed on the status of IsiNdebele in Zimbabwe could well be applicable to IsiXhosa. While in Zimbabwe the language could be considered an insignificant minority by virtue of few numbers of mother tongue speakers, IsiXhosa is one of the largest language groups in South Africa where it enjoys official language status. Similarly, IsiXhosa in South Africa is comparatively well-published such that teaching materials for the Zimbabwean counterparts should not pose many problems.

A staff reporter (2018) on ZBC presented a report on the preservation of mother language as vital. It indicated that the government had acknowledged the importance of preserving local languages and upholding the norms and values of Zimbabwean culture by including the sixteen (16) national languages in the school curriculum at primary level. This came out during a ZBC interview with Author Mnkandla, the principal director of Curriculum Development and Technical Services in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, at the Commemoration of the International Mother Language Day in Harare on the above date. He encouraged people not to look down upon mother languages but to be proud of whom they were through language. Speaking on the same occasion, UNESCO regional officer for education program specialist Abdoul Wahab Coulibaly reiterated that, ignored, mother tongue could be extinct.

It is the cry of amaXhosa in Mbembesi that their language be also given the recognition that it deserves in line with this entire advocacy. It is very crucial to uphold one's indigenous language as it marks one's identity. Losing one's identity is losing oneself.

The ZBC website (2017) further presented a renowned historian, Phathisa Nyathi on 11 December 2017 on calls to embrace indigenous languages. He was quoted as saying, *Language diversity points to a common origin with no minority language other than the fewer numbers of people who understand a particular language*. He further claimed that, *Through language there is the processing and production of knowledge skills and critical values for a people's culture*. It goes without saying that it is apparent that amaXhosa, though few in numbers, still have the right to access knowledge through their culture that also includes language.

Another historian known as Soul Gwakuba challenged people to continue to produce literature using indigenous languages. It has been observed that IsiXhosa literature comes from South Africa where the language has developed so much such that it is one of the leading indigenous languages of the country. A closer look at the language in the two countries will determine to what extent there has been some changes in the Zimbabwean IsiXhosa due to its symbiotic relationship with IsiNdebele in the Mbembesi area.

A publication of 22 January 2018 on Bulawayo 24 news talked of introducing a new radio station Khulumani FM in Bulawayo on 1 March 2018. The website postulated that in the past week the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) had been going round high density suburbs of Luveve, Magwegwe and Cowdry Park doing road shows to raise awareness about the upcoming new radio station. On 2 March 2018, Bulawayo 24 news staff reporter reported that the introduced ZBC Khulumani FM that was launched on 2 March in Bulawayo came on the air the very day. This is a new talk radio station catering for Bulawayo and its surrounding areas. The Face book page announced that the radio station would broadcast from Montrose studio in Bulawayo on frequency 95.0 FM. The page further stated that the station sought to tackle business, social, economic, cultural and linguistic issues cutting across all ages. The station is called to promote all local languages of Zimbabwe under the name *Khulumani-Izwi Lethu, Igugu lethu*.

It is not correct to say it would address all the local languages of Zimbabwe. Instead, it is addressing the local languages of Matabeleland. This is because from the ZBC acting Public Relations Manager Ms Firstme Vhitori's statement that Khulumani FM station will broadcast seven languages namely, Ndebele, Xhosa, Sotho, Venda Kalanga, Tonga and English which are Matabeleland local languages. She also indicated that it would cover a forty kilometre (40 km) radius outside Bulawayo. This would also cater for amaXhosa in Mbembesi area which is about forty kilometres (40km) north of Bulawayo. This was a very welcome development since the marginalised language speakers like IsiXhosa would then participate in their language on air and disseminate information to their counterparts. Ms Vhitori also indicated that the official launch ceremony would be held later at a date to be advised. However, Nambya with a wide coverage of speakers in Hwange and Victoria Falls was left out for unknown reasons, unless if it is an omission of publication.

Pan-African News Wire (2011) affirms that about 30 000 amaXhosa descendants live in Zimbabwe. The article propounds that there was a visiting South African amaXhosa King Sigcawu who was welcomed by amaXhosa at Sojini Secondary School in Mbembesi. Mr Obert Mpofu praised King Sigcawu for upholding amaXhosa culture when he said, *We admire the Xhosa way of life because that is the culture which we had 100 years ago. The Xhosa culture helps us trace these roots because it is the epicentre of the Nguni tradition that binds us all as one people in Southern Africa.*

Usually, when two ethnic groups coexist, they impact on each other on language and culture in their interaction. The original amaXhosa and amaNdebele culture is expected to have changed due to the two ethnic groups' contact in Mbembesi over such a long period (through evolution). The research investigated the extent of change. The researcher believes that the interaction between amaXhosa and amaNdebele in Mbembesi has brought about changes in the lifestyles of both peoples in line with the Dynamic Social Impact which is a Theory of the Origins and Evolution of Culture. This study examined their lifestyle, including language alongside amaNdebele, paying particular attention to any changes from those of South Africa.

Pan-African News Wire (2011) further records that King Sigcawu pledged to build a school in Mbembesi to promote the teaching of IsiXhosa as well as pay the teachers. The king also oversaw a circumcision of five boys at Mdhlengathi homestead at Sojini where beasts and goats were slaughtered for the ceremony and with a lot of opaque beer. The rigid stand on such a practice confirms that amaXhosa are still rooted to their origin. Pan-African News Wire (2011) contends that the King's objective of the visit was to verify if there were genuine amaXhosa living in Zimbabwe. It is hoped that if this visit culminates anything worthwhile, then amaXhosa would have their desires met by the government.

Hlobo (2015), on the same item notes that the ceremony was attended by many government officials and South African embassy officials in Zimbabwe as well as King Lobengula's descendant Peter Zwide Kalanga Khumalo. He further says King Sigcawu attended *ibhodlo*, a Xhosa traditional court. The King is said to have presented gifts to Minister Mpofu and Chief Ndondo of Mbembesi as an honour for their contribution in preserving amaXhosa identity.

The current research tried to discover how much language assimilation and cultural practice was involved that has promoted their coexistence with amaNdebele. The use of IsiXhosa terminology *ibhodlo* for a traditional court and the activity itself are a clear indication that they still hold on to the customary practice of settling their differences their way. AmaNdebele also have traditional courts at the chief's homestead to solve communal problems. Some of their practices are similar, being rooted in their Nguni background.

Courant-Bloemfontein (2017) records the Rhodes University's new language policy that allows students to use their mother tongue for learning. Kunju took advantage of the policy and wrote his PhD thesis about amaXhosa of Mbembesi in IsiXhosa. He mainly focused on their cultural practices. We learn that he spent three years with them, conducting interviews and attending rituals and traditional ceremonies. Kunju (2017) discovered that amaXhosa have not lost their identity and still practice their Xhosa rituals.

We are also told that Kunju (2017) wanted to give the people of Zimbabwe an opportunity to relay their own language, cultural and traditional survival stories. In his research, Kunju reveals

the major concerns of the people on the areas of land, culture, songs, religion, literature, technology, and social media as areas that contribute to their survival.

Among all their cultural practices, circumcision forms the anchor of their identity. However, their language is neglected in education. It is not clear why it is so much behind in terms of use as medium of instruction as well as learning it as a subject in the schools just like what is happening with all other formally marginalised languages. Perhaps the new Constitution might address their plight if implemented in earnest.

The study of the impact of IsiNdebele on IsiXhosa language calls for a study of linguistic cognates of the two varieties and assessing any possible mutual influences. Of interest would be a comparative study of both the phonology and morphology of the two varieties. Secondly, it would be interrogating lexical items and possible shifts in meaning as a result of language contact. Perhaps, there would be a need also to compare orthographies since some perceived differences could be merely orthographic differences. An interesting way of assessing how two language varieties behave is sometimes how they treat loan words, term creation through transliteration. IsiNdebele and IsiXhosa have both been influenced to a large extent by English language and loan words through transliteration that have entered both IsiNdebele and IsiXhosa.

The following examples given from the researcher's studies in her first degree highlight some of the vocabulary items that are similar as a result of language contact between the two peoples in South Africa and maybe the same situation obtains in Mbembesi:

**Table 2.1 Similar vocabulary 2**

IsiXhosa	IsiNdebele	English
apha	lapha	here
ecaleni kwam	eceleni kwami	by my side
nangeempumlo	langempumulo	by the nostrils
ungandibuzi ezonto mna	ungangibuzi lezozinto mina	don't ask me those things

From the given examples, it is observed that some lexical items are common in their vocabulary due to their contact. Significant differences lie in that IsiXhosa has a double vowel not found in IsiNdebele as in *nangeempumlo*. There is vowel elision between consonants *-m* and *-l* in the middle or end of word as in *mpumlo* and *kwam* where IsiNdebele has vowels *-u* and *-i*, respectively. Lastly, there is a dropping of initial consonant as in *apha* where IsiNdebele has *-l* at the beginning. The research established changes that have come about, especially in the spoken languages. The research also established how much IsiXhosa and cultural practices of Mbembesi are similar to what obtains in South Africa.

The possible impact of the relationship between amaNdebele and amaXhosa on the IsiXhosa language and culture would remain an academic process unless it is related to the teaching of IsiXhosa in the Zimbabwean schools, especially at Mbembesi. The constitutional provisions now permit the teaching of community languages that were previously not recognised in the schools such as IsiXhosa. Perhaps, the question likely to be asked would be: Why is IsiXhosa a language with relatively few people? The justification is best explained by Bamgbose (2009:13) in Brock-Utne & Skattum when he said:

*Despite many that show that it makes good sense to begin a child's education in his or her own language, the age-old tradition of teaching a child in a language other than the first language or teaching in a child's first language only in the lower classes of primary school still persists in many African countries. This practice has led to poor scholastic attainment, often manifested in high repeat or failure rates, poor performance in examinations and maladjustment to the world of work.*

Notwithstanding, many children in Zimbabwe including IsiXhosa speakers face educational attainment problems due to barriers imposed by the medium of instruction in schools. Furthermore, decisions on which language to use as the language of instruction also have to do with democracy and with respect for the knowledge, identity and culture of the majority populations of Africa (Brock-Utne, 2008). Several researchers quoted as (Crossley, 2000, 2006; Crossley & Jarvis, 2001; Breidlid, 2002) have also highlighted the significance of culture and

context in policy formation and implementation. Similarly, Simango (2009) argues for the switch to African languages as the languages for the classroom in order for pupils to learn better and to retain their culture. Seepe (2000) has even a stronger view that there is a political, historical, as well as moral case to be made for the use, promotion and development of indigenous languages in the field of education and elsewhere.

While the thrust of this research is partly on impact of IsiNdebele on IsiXhosa, when it comes to languages in education, the situation drastically changes. Of course, for a long time amaXhosa children would be taught IsiNdebele as a subject in the slot for mother tongue. It meant that early school learning would be given mainly in IsiNdebele, a language variety not spoken at homes of IsiXhosa speaking children. That situation is of much interest to this particular study in that the basis for IsiNdebele influence on amaXhosa and their language largely derives from that language education policy. By the way, it was not only IsiXhosa which was affected by the policy but TjiKalanga, TshiVenda, ChiNambya, SeSotho and ChiTonga, all languages spoken in Matabeleland. Colonial policy prescribed the teaching of IsiNdebele in all Matabeleland and parts of Midlands while ChiShona had to be taught to the rest of the country.

Without underplaying the effects of dominance of IsiNdebele and ChiShona over the rest of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe, the impact of English stands out significantly. Actually, as noted above, the hierarchical structure of the Zimbabwean linguistic landscape is dominated by English. English dominates, notwithstanding the reality that those who speak it as first language are barely 50% of the Zimbabwean population. Unlike IsiNdebele which historically was taught in Matabeleland and parts of Midlands and ChiShona in the remaining provinces, English was and continues to be taught throughout the country.

Unfortunately, the debate on the need to recognise previously marginalised languages such as IsiXhosa and others does not rise to demand the use of these languages as media of instruction. Communities would rather have the languages taught as subjects just like IsiNdebele and ChiShona in the curriculum but not as medium of instruction like English. Learning of IsiXhosa as a school subject and not IsiNdebele is but a pyrrhic victory unless these languages are media of

instruction. Zimbabwe's language policy, like that of many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, does not address the crucial issue of mother tongue instruction.

The area of orthography more than in any other area of language has been manipulated to keep a distance among related language varieties. The failure by missionaries and colonial administrators to appreciate the similarities and benefits of wider coverage in communication left a deep rooted legacy, nefarious sociolinguistic attitude which entrench divergence and differences. One of the challenges of newly recognised languages under Zimbabwe's 2013 Constitution is the issue of orthography. IsiXhosa of Mbembesi is no exception.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

The literature already available is insight to this study in a number of ways. Firstly, it gives the context of IsiXhosa in Zimbabwe in terms of both political and social context. Actually, present literature has shown that IsiXhosa of Mbembesi had all along been denied recognition even as a minority language (Hachipola, 1998). The study of amaXhosa and amaNdebele communities' relationship is contextualised by the overall linguistic situation of the country that includes history and policies towards language and education. The review of literature on language and culture contact enriches this study on a number of aspects. It gives the context of contact and drivers of contact and sharing of traits across the communities. Most importantly, the significant impact in the contact is that both linguistic communities were under colonial contact with its pervasive culture that sought to denigrate and displace African cultures.

Studying the impact of IsiNdebele on IsiXhosa or the respective cultures may presuppose that culture is static. The literature has demonstrated and guided this study of the dynamism in culture both from natural processes and from human agency, especially through language policy and community attitudes. Most policies could look progressive but unless communities embrace the positive, the intended purpose might be lost. Hadebe (2006) cites the hostile attitude of some amaNdebele to the promotion of the then "minority languages" in Matabeleland that was seen as undermining IsiNdebele. This study, therefore, benefits from



case studies on language attitudes and how language policies could be undermined as a result of change and dynamism of cultures.

Undoubtedly, the study of the available literature in the field strengthens the theoretical approach as well as the methodology for data collection. It enlightens the research to salient factors such as attitudes that are important in a research of this nature.

It is a fair assessment that substantial research has been carried out on both IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele as well as on the respective cultures. Notwithstanding, there is very little research on IsiXhosa of Mbembesi apart from the recent doctoral study by Kunju (2017). Even that study does not focus on how IsiXhosa as a language and the culture has been influenced by sharing the same geographical and political space with IsiNdebele in Zimbabwe. The major gap so far that this work shall cover includes the paucity of research on IsiXhosa of Zimbabwe as well as how it has been influenced or influenced IsiNdebele due to their affinity.

In this view, it suffices to progress with the study. However, like in any study of its nature it would grow as new evidence emerges and more works in this particular field are produced.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the theory that informs the research paradigm. The Dynamic Social Impact Theory (DSIT) which is a theory of the origins and evolution of culture, attempts to trace and explain the origins and evolution of culture. This theory argues that cultures evolve within the peoples who interact. In this research, the historical developments in Mbembesi have led to amaXhosa culture and IsiXhosa language to go through evolution from the time of their settlement in Mbembesi from South Africa before and during the colonial era. The evolution comes as a result of their interaction and coexistence with amaNdebele in the area. The theory has informed the study on the effects of the symbiotic relationship that has brought about changes in their languages and cultures as they impacted on each other.

The chapter also focuses on the research methodology for this study in question. Research methodology is an applied science of studying how a research is conducted. Moreover, these are procedures used by a researcher in describing, explaining and predicting research phenomena. These methods provide knowledge of the research. The major aim of the methodology is to give a work plan of the research (Rajasekah, 2013).

#### **3.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theory upon which the research is grounded is Dynamic Social Impact Theory (DSIT) which traces the origins and evolution of culture. According to Harton and Bullock (2007) the theory suggests that it is the individual level that predicts how cultures emerge and change at the group level. The theory predicts that in spatially distributed groups, four phenomena will occur as a result of social influence. Harton and Bullock (2007) propound the theory outlining that culture (language included) is created and shaped by local social influence as defined by four phenomena namely: (a) clustering or regional differences in cultural elements; (b) correlation

or emergent associations between elements; (c) consolidation or reduction in variance and (d) continuing diversity. The elements were unfolded in the discussion.

The following paraphrased definitions of the four Cs of elements of the phenomena of Dynamic Social Impact Theory come from Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1978). Clustering or regional differences in cultural elements mean a number of things of the same kind being close together. This suggests that in studying the two ethnic groups' lexical items of both languages, they have been put together because of their similarities mainly because they are both born from Nguni languages of South Africa and, therefore, share a lot of commonalities. A study of the two languages displays mutual intelligibility proposing that the two languages once existed together.

Correlation or emergent associations between elements indicate that there is a shared relationship or that they are closely connected. The two languages are closely related due to the proposed reason above. Consolidation or reduction in variance is said to mean becoming strong or firm combining into one. In this case, the relationship between the two languages is made strong by the similarity in their lexical items and reduction of differences. Continuing diversity implies that there is continuity of difference or variation in the lexical items. This, therefore, means that those lexical items that are different will continue to be different and never come close in similarity. This situation also obtains in the differences in their culture. For example, on the issue of circumcision peculiar to amaXhosa and never mentioned with amaNdebele, except that it is said that they abandoned the practice when they came into Zimbabwe from South Africa.

### **3.2.1 Discussion of the theory**

Harton and Bullock (2007) on the Dynamic Social Impact Theory present heterophily and homophily Socially Culturally Mediated Communication (SCMC). They further say the idea is that individual and collective identities are in constant state of flux due to the Modern Socio-Culturally Mediated Communication environment spanning a range of communication channels, each with its qualities and challenges with given examples of face book, twitter and

whatsapp groups. Latane (1996); in Harton & Bullock (2007) postulates that DSIT is concerned about how individuals located in social space influence each other to create higher patterns of structure. He demonstrates how culture could emerge from individual experience and everyday interaction. Latane (1996); in Harton & Bullock (2007) outlines the four phenomena cited above as fundamental in acculturation. He notes that in social cultural tradition one can view an individual in terms of his relationship with others.

Scott-Phillips (2010) concurs with Latane (1996); in Harton & Bullock (2007) asserting that individuals and groups weave tapestry of cross- cultural identities in collective culture, sub-culture and smaller cliques. To consolidate the idea, Sundarajan, et al., (2016); in Bradie (2017), postulate that heterophilous groups tend to become homophilous over time, maintaining primary diversity that brought the group together. This is demonstrated in that amaNdebele and amaXhosa could have had different cultures as they came to stay together but later assimilated each other in their contact over a long time.

In concurrence with the above scholars, Schumann (1978) affirms that acquiring a new language is a process of acculturation which is not loss of culture but promotes merging of and understanding of cultures. Chan (2014) concurs with Schumann as he defines acculturation as the act of transition, where a group of people move into a lifestyle of another culture. Chan (2014) goes on to say it is where people come to adopt the new culture, behaviours, values, customs and language. He further notes that it is a process that deals with cultural and psychological change of immigrants as they live and interact with the host society.

This can be said of amaXhosa who migrated from South Africa and came to live with amaNdebele in Zimbabwe. The two ethnic groups of amaXhosa and amaNdebele under study came to live together while they were distinctly culturally divergent as they spoke different languages although with some common features and with different cultural practices to a certain extent.

Initially, it was noted that there were some lexical divergence which is language difference at word level. The Nguni languages have different words meaning the same thing. This is as a

result that the four languages of (IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, IsiNdebele and IsiSwati) came from the same ancestor language proto Nguni. Mzilikazi left Zululand for Zimbabwe due to some political instability and had contact with some other tribes such as Sotho, Venda, Kalanga and Rozvi that he conquered and assimilated into his Ndebele nation he was building.

The Khumalos from Zululand lost their original Zulu language as a result of their contact with these different languages. They borrowed new words such as *inhopi* from Kalanga in place of *isijeza* they knew and they also formed new words. It should also be noted that other causes of lexical divergence stem from code-switching that lead to the creation of new speech styles and registers.

Over a long time of contact between amaXhosa and amaNdebele in Mbembesi, both saw some features of their languages and cultures becoming common to both as they interacted. Some form of transformation took place in both groups as they assimilated each other. As a result, the incoming group became bilingual in order to fit into the host group as they coexisted. In the same way, the host group learnt the language of the immigrant group, thereby experiencing some code-mixing and code-switching. At times some lexical items from either language would be permanently adopted into either language, thereby causing a shift from their original languages due to their contact with each other.

In short, Harton and Bullock (2007) summarise by saying that cultures can be created and changed from the bottom up through everyday communication with neighbours, friends and co-workers. In other words, the theory also posits that the same group of people, if they split and live at different geographical locations, there arises some divergence in cultural practices. This can be said of amaXhosa of South Africa and those of Mbembesi in Zimbabwe. If one part interacts with another different cultural group, in this case amaNdebele, their cultures merge and the former group evolves, taking some elements from the surrounding group. The two cultural groups that come into contact maintain their distinct or key cultural elements during assimilation. One good example is of amaXhosa having to observe circumcision that is never practiced by amaNdebele.

The original group that would have split over a long time, when the two are compared, it would be noticed that the latter would have evolved and slightly differed from the former or original group. This scenario obtains with amaXhosa of Mbembesi who have evolved from the original amaXhosa of South Africa with regards to language and culture, to a certain extent, following their interaction with amaNdebele in the area.

Harton and Bullock (2007) quote Cullum and Harton (2007) as saying that people have a larger number of interactions with and greater influence on those who live close to them. They further note that as people influence each other on these different elements, they come to be related to each other and cultures are formed which change over time. The theory emphasises reciprocity. Finally, they claim that as people influence those closest to them, they will come to be more similar to them than those further away, resulting in spatial distributions of cultural elements and correlation. The two ethnic groups of amaXhosa and amaNdebele have impacted on each other in their symbiotic relationship as it has been evidenced in the study.

### **3.2.2 Evolution of language and culture**

Wamalwa and Oluoch (2013) claim that languages are an expression of identity and are repositories of history through which relationships are commenced and sustained through communication. Bradie (2017) postulates that theories of cultural evolution are attempts to model cultural change (language included) as an evolutionary process, taking after Darwin's theory of evolution of natural selection (Darwin, 1871); in Bradie (2017).

Culture itself, which distinguishes one ethnic community from another, has been defined by various scholars. Taylor (1920); in Bradie (2017) the twentieth century American anthropologist defined culture as complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Taylor, 1920); in Bradie (2017). Wamalwa and Oluoch (2013) define culture as a set of traditional beliefs and practices by each community relating to kinship, social, taboos, age and gender roles which is transmitted through oral folklore – stories, fables, proverbs, idioms, riddles, songs and sayings.

Cultural transmission is from one generation to another. All the mentioned above, it is believed, apply to the community of Mbembesi under study.

Bradie (2017) further outlines modern concepts of culture by evolutionary theorists of the twentieth century as socially acquired and socially transmitted information either in the form of ideas embodied in individual minds and brains or as material artifacts which are a product of activities generated by those ideas, quoting (Driscoll, 2017; Sperber & Claidiere, 2008; Boyd & Richerson, 1985). Language and culture are transmitted from one individual to another through verbal means and activity. One can safely say culture is socially constructed. Therefore, evolution of the culture of amaXhosa came as a result of social factors surrounding them.

Bradie (2017) affirms that documentary, archeological and anthropological evidence established that cultures and societies have changed over time in representative structures and patterns of behaviour. He further claims that culture is transmission of information necessary to fit into social and ecological habitat between individuals and generations. Over years, there has been a general informal and formal education that has been passed on from one generation to another. With time, the form of education deviates slightly from the original and preceding generation due to a number of factors, mainly social, relating to interaction between the group and the surrounding environment which get the distorted form.

According to Henrich et al., (2008); in Bradie 2017), the transmission of cultural information occurs over several social pathways. They affirm that models of cultural transmission were developed. They quoted Odling-Smee, Laland and Felman, (2003) stating that, organisms that interact with their environments modify the selection pressures that exist on them and other contemporaneous organisms. More importantly, if the modifications transcend generations, these selection pressures act on their descendants and other populations of future organisms. They further classified three models of transfer as namely, -vertical, horizontal and oblique.

Vertical transfer is said to be whereby parents pass information to their offspring from generation to generation. That is, parents to their children and their children to their own children. Horizontal transfer is given as where peers exchange information at their level in the same generation. Oblique transfer is presented as when information is passed from one

generation to another as in non-parental teaching. This implies that there is transmission of information through teaching and imitation of the teacher. That explains why amaXhosa children were writing an IsiXhosa composition using IsiNdebele figurative language that they obtained from their teacher who taught them for IsiNdebele Grade Seven examination.

Bradie (2017) quotes Richerson and Boyd (2005) and Boyd and Richerson (1985) who declare that other models challenged the role and importance of copying and imitation as mechanisms of cultural transmission. Bradie (2017) also quotes Sperber and Claudiere (2006) and Sperber (2001) who challenged that idea. Copying and imitation is usually experienced on cultural practices. The elderly know how performances are done so they demonstrate to the youths or next generation that copies and imitates. Just like dances of certain cultural festivals that have to be learned by the next generation, so they copy and imitate the preceding generation that would have learnt them from the generation ahead of them. The same applies to other cultural practices in general that need to be demonstrated. It is expected that amaXhosa and amaNdebele children learnt cultural performances from their parents and older siblings.

According to Henrich et al., (2008); in Bradie 2017) epidemiological models to cultural evolution were developed by Sperber and his colleagues (2008) to the fact that they combine a populational approach to cultural change with insights from cognitive science. They suggest that the mind is a structure comprised of domain-specific modules that have evolved to solve specific tasks such as finding mates or detecting cheats. They note that ideas and practices they generate spread through a population by a process in which ideas in one person's brain give rise to behaviour that causes ideas in other people's brains. This way, there is acculturation when two cultures take from each other. Through the two ethnic groups' interaction, they incorporate each other's cultures. It is believed that the two ethnic groups under study were affected the same way which made them impact on each other culturally.

Such a situation causes influence to the language spoken and general behaviour on how to conduct oneself in everyday life, basing on cultural elements that are upheld by a group of people in a society. Stability or diversity of cultural and linguistic elements of different ethnic groups is caused by environmental factors cited by Claidiere et al., (2014); in Bradie 2017). They



purport that some elements merge due to cultural attractors leading to cultural evolution by natural selection of one over the other. The idea is developed in their definition of cultural niche as the capacity of human beings to learn from one another and the constructed modifications of the environment such as socio-cultural institutions and practices. In this case, amaXhosa and amaNdebele have learnt from each other and impacted on each other's language and culture.

All approaches agree on the importance of language in the creation and promulgation of culture. Culture and language are intertwined, with each influencing the other. The scholars proceed to say production and transformation of information are facilitated by language. Notwithstanding that, language also goes through a process of transformation over time hence the popular saying that 'language is dynamic.' It is under this claim of evolution of culture including language that the transformation in IsiXhosa language and amaXhosa culture was established.

Tofan (2005) notes some aspects of culture such as behaviour, music, clothes and occupations as being transmitted from earlier generation in accordance with Latane (1996); in Harton & Bullock (2007) who declares that the next generation is of web and mobile tools, applications and services. Social media stands for the entire collection of online and mobile applications allowing people to create and share information to a large population, so Latane (1996); in Harton & Bullock (2007) notes that. This is exactly the obtaining situation that people find them in today. Latane (1996); in Harton & Bullock (2007) goes on to affirm that individuals strive to maintain their individuality in the face of pressure from other groups.

There are some aspects of culture that are common to the two ethnic groups, especially in terms of behaviour related to the issues of respect. Clothing may have some slight differences, let alone cultural issues of initiation ceremonies that are distinct to amaXhosa where they strive to maintain their individuality in the face of external pressure.

Wamalwa and Oluoch (2013), in their study of Kenya, present United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2003) findings that there are about 6 000 languages spoken in the world of which only eight are of wider community in the world. They

further observe that over 417 languages worldwide are endangered. They quote Kenya which has eight that are endangered and some classified as extinct by UNESCO (2003). The aim of their research was to express the need to preserve and maintain endangered indigenous languages. They clearly pronounced that language is for communication and cultural wisdom of the people and that loss of language was loss of humanity. It was the aim of this research to try and propose ways of preserving IsiXhosa language.

In their study, Wamalwa and Oluoch (2013) reveal that according to UNESCO (2003) a language is endangered when it is on its path towards extinction, when its speakers cease to use it. Ogechi (2003) asserts that languages in Kenya are not equal in status (majority and minority). English and Kiswahili, which are regarded as languages of prestige for economic and civilization reasons, are taught and examined up to secondary school while other indigenous languages are taught up to class 3. The same situation obtains in Mbembesi where English and IsiNdebele are taught up to secondary school while IsiXhosa was taught from ECD up to infant grades at primary school from 2013 up to 2015 and was then abandoned in 2016 as they reverted to IsiNdebele.

Kufakunesu (2017), describing the ecology of language from scholars such as Yang (2014) and Spolsky (2005) postulates it as scientific study of the interactions between any given language and its environment. He further claims that language operates in an environment with conditions for its promotion or otherwise. Again, scholars note that relationship between language and environment including other languages constitutes ecology of language.

Psychological environment affects language and other languages affect what goes on in the mind of bilinguals and multi-linguals in terms of attitudes in relation to the role of languages, language statuses, public and private life, power, dominance and social inequality (Haugen 1972; in Bradie, 2017). IsiNdebele has been given a language status where it is used in the public spheres of both groups. As a result, amaXhosa have become bilingual and at times trilingual with the addition of English language used as a language for education and assuming the dominant power causing social inequality. The obtaining situation is not promoting the development of IsiXhosa.

From Haugen (1972); in Bradie 2017)'s insights, Horberger (2002); in Bradie 2017) deduces that languages in a multilingual environment, like living species, evolve, grow, change, live and die in relation to other languages and their environments. His themes are language evolution, language environment and language endangerment. IsiXhosa language of Mbembesi has faced a lot of challenges posed by the multilingual environment. Instead of growing as a language in its own right, it has changed as a result of interacting with IsiNdebele but may never die but will live on.

The risk of falling out of use can lead to a dead language (Krauss 2007). Obeiro (2010) citing Crystal (2000) makes arguments why people should care when a language dies. Obeiro (2010) outlines causes for language death that have been cited by UNESCO (2003) as a result of external forces such as military, economic, religious, cultural or educational subjugation.

Some causes have been cited as internal pressures such as negative community attitudes towards their own language (not worth to assimilate to global market place) (Batibo, 2005) and (UNESCO, 2003). Wamalwa and Oluoch (2013) cite dominant degree of bilingualism (speakers likely to shift to domination) and non-transmission of language to younger generation as some of the causes. Some indigenous languages have suffered pressure from other indigenous languages such as IsiXhosa from IsiNdebele. AmaXhosa have been forced to become bilingual.

IsiXhosa has been subjected to education policies that have favoured the development of some indigenous languages such as IsiNdebele and ChiShona at the expense of other indigenous languages including IsiXhosa. IsiXhosa was then not regarded even as a minority language like other minority languages. By so doing, the status of IsiXhosa diminished and was drowned by IsiNdebele. IsiXhosa language had to adapt to the environment in order to survive.

As a result, the school pupils had to speak and learn IsiNdebele at school, a move that affected their IsiXhosa language. Their language then went through a process of evolution through the interference of IsiNdebele. IsiNdebele impacted on their IsiXhosa. It goes without saying that their culture was affected at school as well as in the community.

Evolution of language has taken place for all ChiShona and IsiNdebele languages in their promotion and development for the maintenance of the status quo as they have been made languages for education and the public domain. They have also borrowed some terms from other languages including English and those that they termed minority, thereby developing theirs. On the other hand, the so-called minority languages have also adopted some terms from the languages of education which also gave rise to the evolution of their languages.

The political and social environments have stripped IsiXhosa of its linguistic rights. The ruling class promoted their language to be the medium of instruction, forcing it on every child regardless of ethnic origin. The two, ChiShona and IsiNdebele were also forced on different tribes. Language is dynamic in nature, so the changes that take place in it should not come as a surprise. The speakers of various languages end up being multilingual. As a result, phonological differences and lexical items creep into other languages. In such a scenario, the languages never remain original. They then undergo a process of evolution to become something else that resembles theirs and other people's languages. They impact on each other and meet along the way. No language remains stationary. In the same way, IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele have undergone some changes especially in morphology.

Haugen (1972); in Bradie 2017) introduces a term dialinguistics to refer to a degree of bilingualism and a degree of overlap among languages. He further proposes ethnolinguistics as the attitude of users towards a language whether they see it standing for identity, or has a status and shows intimacy between it and its uses. Speakers of those so-called minority languages should be encouraged to have a positive attitude and to be proud of their languages and use them confidently while the rest are encouraged to tolerate and accept them. If amaXhosa could be supported in using their language, their self-esteem would be raised and they could freely participate in public life and at school.

### **3.2.3 A conceptual approach to language contact: Bilingualism**

Tofan (2005) outlines a conceptual approach to language contact leading to bilingualism in line with other scholars. She asserts that language contact involves changes in language system and cultural area leading to bilingualism. She goes on to claim that language contact occurs when speakers using different languages interact, resulting in consequences for the structure of the language influenced by borrowing. Tofan (2005) identifies two types of bilingualism as social bilingualism involving society that makes use of two languages and individual bilingualism of one person using two languages in propagating the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing of both.

According to Tofan (2005) language evolution through bilingualism is closely related to development of vocabulary, expression of semantic and functional parameters, phonology and morphology among other things. Those who migrate from their place of origin are liable for their language transformations. AmaXhosa migrated from South Africa and settled in Mbembesi interacting with amaNdebele who are said to have also come from South Africa long before. Ngara (1982) concurs with Tofan (2005) where he explains why languages resemble each other. The two may have certain features in common because these features express universal and/or typological tendencies. This is because they have inherited features from a common ancestor language then the two are genetically related.

These two ethnic groups are in contact with each other and, therefore, influence each other linguistically and culturally. Over a very long period of coexistence, the two ethnic groups have had their languages overlapping. Tofan (2005) describes a scenario similar to the one on study when she notes that two communities with different languages stay in contact impacting on each other socially and linguistically, and cultural values are transmitted from one language to another. The situation obtains with amaNdebele and amaXhosa of Mbembesi who have coexisted impacting on each other's language and culture.

Tofan (2005) argues that group identity is defined by the difference between groups including linguistic aspects. She further observes that language is more important if it binds different

cultural groups, and transfers elements from one group to another depending on flexibility of the language. She still argues that language and identity involve components such as ethnicity, behaviour; rituals expressed in language and illustrated forms of attitudes and values which determine distribution between social groups. Tofan (2005) further claims that an ethnic group or ethnolinguistics group is a community different from the other by lifestyle, identity and language. The two ethnic groups are different in their own right but have impacted on each other in their coexistence over a very long period.

Focusing on effects of language contact, Tofan (2005) affirms that languages in contact influence each other through direct borrowing or loan words whereby a native word is replaced by a more expressive new word or a need for new semantic distinction from another language. Furthermore, modifications which come through language contact experience transfer of linguistic material in terms of combinations of sound, (phonology) meaning, (semantics) and syntactic relations.

Ngara (1982) concurs with Tofan (2005) that one language takes something from another language and makes it into a permanent part of its own system. He says language contact may generate new languages combining elements of two or more languages in contact as well as add elements that do not originate in either language. The borrowed forms are integrated into the language. The study established the truth of this matter in relation to IsiNdebele and IsiXhosa of Mbembesi.

Ngara (1982) further notes that depending on the extent of adaptation of borrowed items - phonology, writing system, grammar of the language of both donor and recipient languages, borrowed elements that fill a lexical gap become part of the original languages. He quotes substrate influence on phonology of Indian English that pronounces both -v and -w as -v reduced to one sound as in -vet- and -wet with no distinction. Another example he gives is of Indo-Aryan languages of North India which have so many features in common with unrelated Dravidian languages of South India. This is likely to be the same scenario with IsiNdebele and IsiXhosa in which some of their lexical items are borrowed from either language, due to their interaction.

Anderson (2017) agrees with the above scholars that borrowing within languages in contact results in either loan word being accepted unchanged, phonology of the borrowing language changed or the loan word being altered in some way, to conform to this native phonology. The scholars further explain that the borrowed lexicon becomes part of the grammar of the borrowing language. They also say bilinguals can easily transfer lexicons from one language to another and that interference is common in the speech of one. All the stated contribute to the evolution of language which can be ascribed to IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele of Mbembesi.

Lastly, Tofan (2005) highlights effects of language contact as mostly attributed to imposition of donor language or need to create new structures for inter-ethnic communication. This results in either widening of cultural horizons, increasing possibilities of communication or conflict situations, especially when minority groups are forced to abandon their language under social pressures. Ngara (1982) also concurs with her where he affirms that English is the most common donor of the world because most languages borrow from it, for example when new things are introduced such as a computer or a new concept. The two ethnic groups under study have heavily relied on English in the borrowing of terms of their social and educational gadgets.

According to Ngara (1982), borrowed elements corresponding to elements already existing in recipient language are core-borrowed. Also phonetic and semantic form of borrowing is experienced from the donor language. Obviously, the donor enjoys higher social, cultural and political prestige than the recipient. Ngara (1982) again claims that nouns are easily borrowed than verbs. He observed that in Japanese, nouns have been borrowed from Chinese. It, therefore, means that interference in this case is a result of bilingualism experience. Ngara (1982) concludes that even a dead language can be a donor. It is more likely to be the possible positive results with the two ethnic groups of study since IsiNdebele was then recognised even as a language for education, thereby amaXhosa accepting it for their benefit.

Another concept introduced and discussed by Ngara (1982) as a result of contact between languages is code-switching, that he defines as implying using two or more languages in a single utterance as a way of filling a lexical gap which often leads to language interference. Code-

switching has been mostly noticed with English as a secondary language and a primary language which is normally the first language where the speaker is more proficient in.

### **3.2.4 Conclusion**

The Dynamic Social Impact Theory informs of an evolution of culture that includes language. This study looks at cultural evolution of two ethnic Nguni peoples of amaNdebele and amaXhosa of Mbembesi with their languages of IsiNdebele and IsiXhosa. With their common ancestor, the two ethnic groups have gone through a process of acculturation leading to the evolution of their linguistic tendencies due to their contact over a long period. As a result, phonological, morphological, semantical and syntactical changes have occurred in their original languages. This has come about due to the fact that they have been subjected to political, social and psychological conditions promoting their assimilation.

Their association has resulted in the reduction of variance in their distinctness. Their everyday interaction has resulted in their bilingual state. This has been aggravated by the government's national policies that have seen IsiNdebele as a high variety and IsiXhosa as a low variety in their uses in education and society in general. The two languages and cultures have emerged through their everyday interaction which has created their harmony in their co-existence. However, there are still some elements that have remained distinctly belonging to each ethnic group, marking their identity such as circumcision only practiced by amaXhosa.

### **3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

With reference to Crotty (1998) a research methodology is a comprehensive strategy that silhouettes choices and the use of specific methods relating them to anticipated outcomes. The major content of this chapter was to provide a detailed description of why and how data was collected. To ensure validity of the data, data collection strategies were explained and a description of the methods used for data analysis and presentation was also made. The data collection techniques that were used include interviews and document analysis.



Kothari (2004) describes methodology as a way to systematically solve the research problem. The problem of investigation was 'The linguistic impact of the symbiotic relationship between amaNdebele and amaXhosa on the IsiXhosa language and amaXhosa culture in the Mbembesi area of Zimbabwe'. The chapter unveiled the geographical area of study, the research design used, the population and the sample used in the study as well as the sampling procedure. Justification for the sample was also given. Furthermore, the chapter described the research instruments used in data collection including methods used; data processing and analysis were made.

### **3.3.1 The research design**

Kothari (2004) defines research design as a plan that specifies the sources and types of information relevant to the research problem. He further elaborates by stating that it is a strategy specifying which approach would be used for gathering and analysing the data as well as including the time and cost budgets. The research was qualitative in nature and language was the main focus of the research. The structure of research method is related to research questions and their problems.

Saldana et al., (2014:3-4) in their definition of qualitative research say:

*Qualitative research is an umbrella term for a wide variety of approaches to and methods for the study of natural social life. The information or data collected and analysed is primarily (but not exclusively) non quantitative in character, consisting of textual materials such as interview transcripts, field notes, and documents, and/or visual materials such as artifacts, photographs, video recordings and internet sites that document human experiences about others and/or one's self in social action and reflexive states.*

Concurring with this definition is Crossman (2017) who claims that:

*Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data and that seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help us understand social life through the study of*

*targeted populations or places.*

From the given definitions, one concludes that qualitative research is the kind of research that seeks to understand social behaviour in a naturalistic manner. The two ethnic groups of amaXhosa and amaNdebele were studied in their natural set up as they conducted their daily lives.

Chiromo (2006), on the other hand, describes a qualitative research as a descriptive and interpretive approach that allows for the investigation of the informal realities that can only be perceived from the inside of a community. The researcher visited the schools in the area of study and also met some elders and youths of the community. Unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews were conducted with the sampled population. Document analysis was also another instrument for gathering data.

The researcher has chosen to employ the qualitative research approach being a case study of amaXhosa and amaNdebele culture sharing groups in Mbembesi community. Tuckman (1994) presents a descriptive survey under a qualitative research as involving acquiring information about one or more groups of people, perhaps about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes or previous experience by asking those questions and tabulating their answers. Original data from the sample that represented the population presented information through responding to a set of questions from the researcher in an interview.

This design was suitable for this research because it examined the situation as it was on the ground. Primary data was collected through unstructured, semi- structured and structured interviews that were administered by the researcher. The phenomena were studied in a natural setting displaying their knowledge, opinions and beliefs on the subject in question and the researcher was a participant observer (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

In this regard, the acquired information was suitable to meet the desired objectives of the proposed study that sought to establish the degree of influence between the languages and cultures of amaXhosa and amaNdebele of Mbembesi, and how their symbiotic relationship

impacts on amaXhosa. The data obtained was the participants' spoken words and behaviour in their natural setting as affirmed by Creswell (2016) as the characteristics of the method.

Kothari (2004) outlines elements contained in the qualitative research design as follows:

- Clear statement of the research problem.
- Procedures and techniques to be used for gathering primary information.
- The population to be studied.
- Methods to be used in processing and analysing data.

Each of the elements was discussed one by one in relation to the prevailing research.

### **3.3.2 Setting**

The study was conducted in Mbembesi area that falls under Umguza district about forty kilometres north of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. The area is co-habited by the two ethnic groups of amaXhosa and amaNdebele (although it is alleged that a few maShona are also found living there) with their distinct languages and cultures that have impacted on each other. It is a rural setting. The two ethnic groups have shared a lot of linguistic and cultural experiences in their contact and coexistence. It was the intention of this research to investigate the impact of their symbiotic relationship on IsiXhosa language and amaXhosa culture in addressing oral and written languages in the community and at school respectively as well as cultural practices.

### **3.3.3 The population of study**

Parahoo (2006) defines population of study as the total number of units from which data can be collected such as individuals, artifacts events or organisation. Cohen and Manion (1994) define population as a group about which the researcher is interested in gaining information and drawing conclusion. Burns and Grove (2007) define it as any group of individuals that has one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. The researcher was interested in establishing how contact between two ethnic groups has impacted on each other's language and culture.

There is always a target population and accessible population. Sometimes what one targets is not necessarily what one accesses, depending on many variables. The target population of the study was amaXhosa and amaNdebele community in Mbembesi area in Umguza district in Zimbabwe. This comprised the elderly of the community who were well versed on their absolute language and culture and youths who have brought in some elements in their language and culture from other ethnic groups surrounding them through interaction. Heads of the four primary schools in the area were considered to be vital in giving information about school pupils' performance and the general information on the implementation of the Zimbabwe's 2013 Constitution. Teachers in the four primary schools were also very suitable sources of information about their school pupils' performance in their language studies. School pupils also marked a good source of data showing the actual written languages in question.

#### **3.3.4 Population sample**

It becomes difficult to work with the entire group being studied, so, a sample is always chosen as a workable group to represent the entire population of study. This is also in agreement with what Hannagan (1982:43) affirms where he says:

*A sample is anything less than a full survey of a population taken to give an idea of the quality of the whole.*

Scott and Usher (1996) define sample as any part of the population used to generalise findings to the population. Hittleman and Simon (2002), commenting on this consideration, observe that it is realistic for researchers to work with accessible populations, which are groups that are convenient, however, the groups must be representative of the target population.

Cohen and Manion (1994) present a sampling strategy of purposeful sampling that helps in building a sample that is satisfactory to the specific needs. Convenience and purposive sampling of accessible subjects in terms of time and reach have been employed.

In this study, purposive sampling was employed whereby twelve male elders of advanced years that have lived long in the community from as early as to know the obtaining situation from the interaction of the two ethnic groups were chosen. These elders were expected to perfectly

know IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele to understand the changes that are taking place in their society compared to the life experienced in the past. They were the best target group to solicit for language and cultural information from.

A sample of ten male youths comprising six amaXhosa and four amaNdebele of the community was also chosen to establish the changes in the languages because, usually, the youths change language faster than adults.

As earlier alluded to, all the four heads of the schools (one male and three female) under study were asked to participate in the interviews so as to shed light on what exactly is happening in their schools pertaining language use in the school curriculum.

The criteria for selecting three school teachers for the interviews were that they were supposed to be amaXhosa who perfectly knew the language as well as IsiNdebele and probably to have taught the two languages. They were all female. Two of the teachers had been moved from their schools to pilot the teaching of IsiXhosa in the two chosen schools from 2013. They were the best teachers to solicit information from about pupils' performance.

Seven amaXhosa Grade Seven pupils of mixed gender (four girls and three boys) were chosen to write a short composition about their school in both IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele to ascertain the level of impact of IsiNdebele and IsiXhosa among the school pupils. In addition to the analysis of the written compositions, the indigenous languages syllabus and the teachers' scheme books were also analysed to ascertain the indigenous language taught.

A male member of the Xhosa Cultural Society was also chosen to supply information about how the committee is involved in the promotion of the implementation of the Zimbabwean 2013 Constitution in the society and in the schools. A male Xhosa activist was also chosen to provide any information about amaXhosa cultural life. It was believed that all the information that was obtained from all the groups would be used to answer the research questions.

### **3.3.5 Data collection tools and Procedure**

According to Kothari (2004) a case study is an analysis described as a careful and complete observation of a social unit like a person, family, institution, cultural group, entire community (interrelations) as one locates factors that account for behaviour patterns of a given unit. It is further asserted that this gives deeper perceptions and insight. It also gives personal experiences and traces natural history, thereby establishing a motivation for adopting certain behaviour, historical analysis and social changes. In this case, it refers to a cultural group in a community.

The researcher and an assistant who stayed in the community went to collect data in Mbembesi community for five days. The researcher first visited the Matabeleland North Provincial Education Director seeking permission to conduct the research in the schools. The application letter for permission that was accompanied with the University of South Africa ethical clearance form and a participant consent form, the topic of research and the sets of research questions all made it easy for the researcher to receive a positive response from the Provincial Education Director. After getting a clearance letter from the Provincial Education Director, the District Schools Inspector also cleared the researcher to visit the schools. The four primary schools to be visited for data collection were: Maqaqeni, Mqwashwini, Mfanyana and Cameron.

All participants in the various groups were fully briefed on the purpose of the research. The researcher clarified that participation was voluntary and they could pull out any time without a penalty if they so wished. They were asked to sign a consent form. Interviewees were given the opportunity to ask questions freely about the research. They were encouraged to be at ease during the whole interview process.

The researcher is quite conversant with IsiNdebele and so interviews were held in IsiNdebele with the elderly participants and youths in the community to solicit information on the changes in the languages. The same situation obtained when interviews were held with a Xhosa Cultural Society committee member and a Xhosa activist.

The researcher had earlier visited chief Ndondo to indicate her intention to conduct interviews with some members of the community with regards to her research for her studies. After getting clearance from the provincial and district education authorities, the researcher also visited the chief seeking permission to conduct the interviews. The chief actually assisted in organising meetings with the elders and the youths at designated points which made it easier for the researcher to conduct the focus groups interviews. A Xhosa Cultural Society committee member was visited at his home and the Xhosa activist was met in Bulawayo city.

### **3.3.5.1 Interviews**

Koskei and Simiyu (2015) define interview as a systematic way of talking and listening to people and as another way to collect data from individuals through conversations so as to gain knowledge from them. An interview can also be defined as a conversation through which data are gathered. A research interview comprises an interviewer and the interviewee. Koskei and Simiyu (2015) further note that interviewees are primary data (for study) who are able to discuss their perceptions and interpretation in regards to a given situation. They cite the role of the researcher as that of asking questions to elicit valid responses from respondents. Hoyle et al., (2002) comment that questions have dual goals of motivating respondents to give full and precise replies while avoiding biases stemming from social desirability, conformity or other constructs of disinterest. So the researcher has to know and select appropriate methods to address the needs of research questions.

Gray (2004) affirms that there is need to attain highly personalised data opportunities to probe good return rate with those with difficulties with written language. He goes on to list the right skills of the interviewer as: the ability to listen, being non-judgmental, having a good memory, and the ability to think on his/her feet and to also have an interview guide that is clear so as to avoid ambiguity. A good interviewer should not ask personal or illegal questions.

The interviewer co-ordinates and asks questions and the interviewee responds to the questions being asked. Interviews can be viewed as a systematic way of talking and listening to people and a method of collecting data from individuals through conversations. Interviews can be an

interchange of ideas between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest (Klave, 1996). The research requires in-depth information on the target population's opinions and beliefs, therefore, face to face interviews become appropriate.

Gray (2004) presents types of interviews and their characteristics as follows: structured, semi-structured, unstructured and no-directive. The following is a general discussion on types of interviews before making an indication of which types were employed in the study.

### **Structured / standardised**

The same questions are asked to all respondents following the same wording and same sequence (Corbetta, 2003). The aim is for all interviewees to be given exactly the same questions. The goal is to ensure that replies can be aggregated. Specific questions call for a fixed range of answers which can be closed ended, pre-coded and fixed choices. The interview becomes rigid as the interviewer's intention may influence the respondent through the interview guide. The common format is for easy analysis, coding of data and comparison. Non-verbal clues – facial expression and gestures can be recorded (Corbetta, 2003).

Interviews with heads of schools and teachers were mainly in English but with some bit of IsiNdebele to clarify some ambiguities. The interview questions for teachers were structured in order to solicit information that answers the research questions.

### **Semi – structured**

Interviews for the heads of schools were semi-structured. The members of the community were asked to participate in the survey through semi-structured open-ended interviews. The advantages of such a method were that more information at greater depth was obtained, there was flexibility as questions could be restructured and a good rapport was created between the two parties resulting in honest responses. There was no language barrier since amaXhosa also speak IsiNdebele in addition to their IsiXhosa language.



## **Unstructured**

This is a flexible, casual method, with no need to follow detailed interview guide. The respondent is encouraged to speak openly, frankly and give as much detail as possible. The interviewer is not prepared much but shares opinions, knowledge and experience. Researcher may not know what direction to take and may obtain data irrelevant to the questions of study.

The interviewer needs to think about what to ask and ask questions carefully and phrase them properly and know when to probe and prompt, (Gatara, 2010). The interviewer should be a good listener and note new and interesting data that the interviewee gives. Gatara (2010) further notes that the researcher requires good communication facilitation skills and be able to investigate underlying motives but which may be difficult to code and analyse as the data. This type of interview was conducted with the Xhosa Cultural Society committee member and the Xhosa activist because they had not been included earlier in the list of interviewees.

## **Document analysis**

Document analysis also took place where the indigenous languages syllabus and scheme books were assessed to check on what issues teachers planned for the pupils. Written compositions in the two languages for the pupils were checked to ascertain the level of learners' proficiency in the two languages. The structures of the languages were also analysed. Learners were given a topic on which to write a short composition about their school using both languages. A comparison of the performances was made. This was also done in order to assess the degree of impacting on each other's language as a result of their contact over a long period. The transcripts were translated into English with the help of the teacher for IsiXhosa language. However, most of the sentences were comprehensive to the researcher since the two languages are mutually intelligible.

### **3.3.5.2 Data analysis**

Raw data were spread and analysed, with the researcher commenting on specific issues related to the topic. Data gathering was mainly from primary sources, making the information more

reliable than that from secondary sources. Face to face interviews provided accurate information on what obtains. The advantage was that questions could be clarified or elaborated to solicit unforeseen responses. Analysis of findings was done through triangulation after all data were gathered.

### **3.3.6 Ethical considerations**

Informed consent and signing of consent forms, voluntary participation and the participants' right to withdraw from participation at any point were clearly communicated. The researcher explained to the participants why she would be carrying out that research, pointing out that it was purely for academic purposes. She also informed the participants how in the end it might benefit the whole community if the government addressed the plight of the marginalisation and segregation in terms of their culture preservation, including language of education in the school. She further indicated that participants were to freely participate on voluntary basis, assuring them of anonymity and safety, as codes would be used for the participants during interviews in place of their names. There was no language barrier since amaXhosa also speak IsiNdebele in addition to their IsiXhosa language.

### **3.3.7 Conclusion**

A qualitative research design was chosen for this research because it was seen to be suitable for this case study of two ethnic groups coexisting in Mbembesi area in Umguza district of Matabeleland. Purposive sampling of participants involved heads of schools, teachers, elders and youths of the community, a Xhosa Cultural Society committee member, a Xhosa activist and school pupils. Research instruments and procedure were presented. Structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews were held with various cited groups except school pupils. Document analysis involved a study of the indigenous languages syllabus and teachers' scheme books as well as written work given to school pupils which was written in both IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele with English translation of each work. The data collected were analysed and discussed with a triangulation of the results. The findings were tabulated in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and discussion of data collected in Mbembesi area. The aim of the study was to investigate the extent and impact of the symbiotic relationship between amaNdebele and amaXhosa of Mbembesi in Zimbabwe on IsiXhosa language and culture. Among the suggested objectives was also one to find out how education policies have affected the teaching of IsiXhosa language in the Mbembesi area. The other reason for carrying out the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of Zimbabwe's new Constitution of 2013 in elevating IsiXhosa language to be officially recognised. The research might also conscientise education policy makers and implementers on how best they could create opportunities for effective IsiXhosa language teaching up to tertiary level as is the case in the other indigenous languages, including those that were formerly marginalised. Furthermore, it may enhance the development of IsiXhosa in Mbembesi and other areas countrywide where amaXhosa are found. This could promote the preservation of IsiXhosa language and culture at national level so as to save the language from extinction.

#### **4.2 FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH HEADS OF SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS**

The findings are presented to show what actually transpires on the ground against what is speculated to be taking place. In line with the government policy embraced in the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe that now recommends the teaching of all indigenous languages that have been officially recognised, the teachers and heads of the four Mbembesi area primary schools, namely; Maqaqeni, Emqwashwini, Mfanyana and Cameron, were interviewed. There is only one secondary school called Sojini in Mbembesi since it is such a small community. In addition to the target population, John Tallach (Ingwenya) mission High School in Ntabazinduna was also visited. This school was visited because John Tallach was the first primary school to be established by the missionary minister Radasi to teach amaXhosa boys to read and write. The school is, however, situated in amaNdebele area under the Ndebele chief Ndiweni and

IsiNdebele is the language of the area. Moreover, the 1931 Doke recommendation discouraged the teaching of other indigenous languages in favour of IsiNdebele in Matabeleland. As a result, IsiXhosa was abolished and disappeared from the schools.

#### **4.2.1 Interviews with heads of schools**

The researcher decided to interview the heads of the four schools first before the teachers for courtesy to the leaders of the institutions as well as for transparency on the purpose of the visits. This constituted 100% of the target population of heads of schools. The interview for the heads was semi-structured as it came as an afterthought to interview the heads in addition to the teachers. The first school to be visited was Maqaqeni where HEAD A is the male school head. The researcher asked about the position in the school pertaining to the implementation of the Zimbabwean 2013 Constitution. Only the crucial information was captured. The researcher elicited the following information from HEAD A:

*In line with the new education policy, two primary schools (Emqwashwini and Cameron) out of the four had been chosen to be a pilot project for the re-introduction of IsiXhosa in the schools. My Xhosa teacher Ms Hiyashe was moved by the Ministry of Education from Maqaqeni to Emqwashwini to act as a specialist Xhosa teacher while another is at Cameron. The population in my school is such that 90% of the pupils are amaXhosa while 10% are amaNdebele because most of the Ndebele pupils choose to go to Ingwenya and Mbizo Primary Schools in Ntabazinduna close by.*

*Despite that composition, IsiXhosa is not taught in the school, instead IsiNdebele is being taught. The pupils are failing IsiNdebele because of their negative attitude towards the language. The teachers are willing to teach IsiXhosa but they do not have the supporting material to execute that duty. Only the National Anthem and the Lord's Prayer have been translated into Xhosa.*

The next school to be visited was Emqwashwini Primary School which was made one of the pilot schools to teach IsiXhosa. The school is headed by a lady, HEAD B, was asked about the teaching of IsiXhosa in the school and she provided the following information:

*A call was made by the Ministry for amaXhosa children to be taught in their mother language. Efforts to get the program running were made through the establishment of a committee that sees to the implementation of the policy. Ms Hiyashe, the Xhosa teacher in the school who was moved from Maqaqeni Primary School, and other indigenous languages teachers in the country went to Harare in 2017 for a workshop to translate the syllabus into the sixteen languages but the material produced has not yet reached the schools. We have a challenge of teaching materials to support the teaching of the subject. The Xhosa Cultural Society committee accused us for not implementing the new constitution. They even call us names like “inhlanga” which is derogatory.*

*The performance of the Xhosa pupils in Ndebele Grade 7 examinations has been poor over the years. They score between 3 and 7 units, indicative of very low results. However, the pupils of this school fair very well at district and provincial levels in cultural dance competitions. For the Early Childhood Education (ECD) A classes, untrained local community amaXhosa teachers are employed.*

The third school to be visited was Mfanyana Primary School where a lady, HEAD C, is heading the school. She was asked to speak about the implementation of the Zimbabwean 2013 Constitution. She presented the following observations:

*There are many Xhosa pupils in the school but they learn Ndebele. There are many teachers who are available who can teach IsiXhosa language but there is no literature and teaching or learning material. The desire to implement the 2013 Constitution is there but there are challenges that I have highlighted. The pupils themselves like their culture because you see them participating in cultural dances. There should be some training of Xhosa teachers. Meanwhile, the retired teachers could be re- engaged to use their past experience as a starting point. It is our desire to see the language being taught from primary up to university like all other indigenous languages in the country.*

The last head to be interviewed was also a lady, HEAD D, at Cameron Primary School which is one of the two pilot schools for IsiXhosa program. She had this to say concerning the teaching of IsiXhosa in the school:

*The program started in 2013 and went on up to 2015. Then there was a switch-over back to Ndebele teaching in 2016 because the program lacked continuity. There was only one IsiXhosa specialist teacher who came from David Livingstone. The teaching was done in Xhosa but testing was done in Ndebele. Decision making is done at Ministry level. The community is very aggressive as to why Xhosa is not taught in Mbembesi. The community elders have approached the schools to register their grievances and it is suspected that they took the matter up to the District Schools Inspector and Provincial Education Director. The teachers are very much willing to teach the subject but their willingness is hampered by lack of supporting material in the form of teaching and learning resources. I feel that the only way to promote the teaching of IsiXhosa is through the inclusion of any teacher in the area because they speak the language with the pupils. That way the program can start rolling.*

#### **4.2.1.1 Discussion from heads of schools**

Although the 2013 Constitution tried to promote the teaching of IsiXhosa, it appears that the sections from the Ministry of Education and the Xhosa community are not yet ready to have the subject taught in Mbembesi schools. The first disadvantage was that the first Xhosa school was established at Ingwenya Mission which lies under the Ndebele chief's jurisdiction. Every ruler wants his authority to be felt, so by virtue of his position, chief Ndiweni could not promote the learning of IsiXhosa at the expense of learning IsiNdebele.

The second disadvantage was that Doke (1931) promoted the adoption of IsiNdebele to be a *lingua franca* in Matabeleland and to be taught as a subject in school at the expense of all other indigenous languages in the region, calling them minority languages. IsiXhosa in Mbembesi was equally affected. Chimhundu (2005) presents the following observation on the Doke 1931 recommendation:

*In his very first recommendation, Doke stated very clearly that only two African languages were to be recognised officially in the country: one for the main Shona-speaking area, including the non-Shona areas south of the Karanga, that is, Shangani; and one for the Ndebele-speaking area, including the areas covered by Kalanga (1931a: 76). Doke actually listed the administrative districts in which Ndebele was to be so recognised and further recommended the substitution of literary Zulu for official and educational purposes, arguing that Ndebele is recognised as a dialect of Zulu, and that Zulu already has a growing literature which Ndebele sadly lacks (1931a: 99).*

It would seem like Doke was treating IsiNdebele as a dialect of Zulu, implying that IsiZulu can easily replace IsiNdebele when it comes to literature. That explains why IsiNdebele syllabus had prescribed literature set books comprising both IsiNdebele and IsiZulu novels. Grammar books and other literature books such as poetry and proverbs could be shared within the two languages because they share a common Nguni background. The two languages are mutually intelligible to the extent that people might think that indeed IsiNdebele is a dialect of IsiZulu. IsiZulu was very much developed as compared to IsiNdebele; as a result, IsiNdebele heavily depended on IsiZulu.

IsiXhosa of Mbembesi fell in the second category of areas in the districts prescribed in which IsiNdebele was to be recognised at the expense of the other indigenous languages. AmaXhosa think that they have been linguistically colonised by amaNdebele. The other disadvantage is that there are no amaXhosa language trained teachers. Lastly, there is lack of teaching and learning materials in the language, which is to be used as resource material in the subject area. It is disheartening to note that the learners are denied the right to their language and identity and they should not, therefore, be blamed for not performing well in a language which is not theirs. Although the pupils did not perform well academically in the indigenous language at Mqwashwini primary school, they did very well in cultural dance competitions at district and provincial levels as a mixed Xhosa and Ndebele group.

The Xhosa Cultural Society committee is not involving the schools heads in their plans and meetings. They use derogative terms in relation to the non-Xhosa heads calling them *inhlanga*

or *ihole*, the derogatory terms to mean the despised and of less human nationality, thus belittling them. Perhaps that kind of negative attitude is the one preventing them from involving the heads. It would be prudent for the committee to include the heads who may quickly influence the implementation of the education policies. The committee should wisely involve the school heads who seem to be good administrators and organisers instead of antagonising them. The success of a program is courtesy of the organisers. There should be cooperation between the school and the community for any program to succeed. Negative attitudes should be dealt with because they become a stumbling block towards development. However, it has been noted that some Xhosa community members have a negative attitude towards the move to have their language taught in the schools and do not support the idea because they think the language does not have any future gains.

The common issue of concern is lack of teaching and learning materials for IsiXhosa language. The provision of teaching and learning materials is the starting point and is key in the implementation of a program. The teachers and pupils are ready for the subject but their hands are tied. The Xhosa Cultural Society Committee is said to have gone to complain to the District Schools Inspector about the non-teaching of IsiXhosa in the schools without visiting the schools first to establish the challenges of teaching if. The challenges, however, include non-availability of teaching and learning materials. UNICEF assisted in the production of Nambya and Tonga materials including teachers' guides and text books and other material for the new curriculum but produced nothing on Xhosa. The educated Xhosa people should spear-head the writing of materials in their language.

It appears there is some desperation for the implementation of the teaching of IsiXhosa in all the primary schools. The community is wondering why the teaching of IsiXhosa is lagging behind when a teacher has been moved from David Livingstone to the school for the purpose of teaching IsiXhosa to the pupils. The heads feel that all the teachers in the school are in a position to teach the language since they all speak the language with the pupils. The major obstacle is the non-availability of teaching and learning materials. Notwithstanding, the community leaders seem to put the blame on the schools, which is why they took it upon



themselves to approach the Ministry of Education authorities to address the situation. But their efforts to engage the ministry personnel did not yield any positive results. The old folks are nostalgic of how the retired teachers used to teach IsiXhosa long back, when it was being taught. Cultural issues are embraced with joy. They seem to understand that they should maintain their identity through cultural practices.

#### **4.2.2 Interviews with teachers**

Three teachers of the four schools constituting 75% of the target population were interviewed in the three Mbembesi primary schools. In the first school the researcher felt that it was not necessary to interview any teacher since the language was not taught. However, when she got to the other school where it was not taught, she decided to interview a Xhosa teacher. This was in addition to the two teachers that were placed in the two pilot schools to teach IsiXhosa.

##### **4.2.2.1 Responses to the interview questions**

###### **Question 1**

###### **Whether classes were a mixture of amaXhosa and amaNdebele students:**

Three of the teachers interviewed constituting 100% of the teachers interviewed expressed that there is a mixture of amaXhosa and amaNdebele students with amaXhosa outnumbering amaNdebele. This concurred with HEAD A's claim at Maqaqeni that, 90% of the student enrolment is amaXhosa with the remaining 10% constituting amaNdebele.

###### **Question 2**

###### **Concerning whether children embrace each other's language and if there are conflicts among them:**

TEACHER A stated that, *they do speak each other's language and there are no conflicts among them. They accommodate each other in their interaction in class and at play.* The other two teachers concurred with her giving a total of 100% respondents.

### Question 3

**As for which language the teachers speak and which one they use in class when they communicate with the pupils:**

All the three teachers, constituting 100%, confirmed that they use both languages when communicating with the students in class and outside classroom. *This is done to make sure that both groups understand through their mother languages* as indicated by TEACHER B.

### Question 4

**About which language is a medium of instruction in class and which of the two is taught as a subject:**

All the teachers constituting 100% answered that English is the medium of instruction and IsiNdebele is taught as a subject.

### Question 5

**Similarities and differences in their languages:**

TEACHER C indicated that, *some syllables are similar, for example, -ma, -ba and -tha although pronunciation differs in words like mama. Differences are seen in the existence of some syllables found in IsiXhosa, for example, -tya that does not exist in IsiNdebele but the same sound is represented by -tsha.* The researcher came across a local lady on the way and casually asked her to give IsiXhosa terminology at random with IsiNdebele equivalents. A list of similar and different words from the teachers and a local lady in the community (who provided most of the words) is given bellow:

**Table 4.1 SIMILARITIES**

IsiXhosa	IsiNdebele	English translation
apha	lapha	here
intombazana	intombazana/inkazana	a girl
me	mama	mother

inkomo	inkomo	cow/ox/bull
nintsi	nengi	many
kancinci	kancane	a little bit
kuthi	kithi	at our home
ndicela	ngicela	may I have
mauti	mawuthi	when you say
kuthwa	kuthiwa	it is said
izifundi	izifundiswa	the elite
ekhayeni	ekhaya	at home
iludwe	ulude	traditional vegetable
ndiyafusha	ngiyafusha	I am drying vegetables
uzandixolela	zangixolela	you will pardon me
mamamu	mama wami	my mother
siphilile nathi	siyaphila lathi	we are also well
umngqusho	umngqutshu	samp
umxhaxha	umxhanxa	type of traditional food
umphothulo	umphothulo/umcaba	type of traditional food
umphokoqo	umphokoqo	type of traditional food
nizigcine	lizigcine	look after yourselves
nawe	lawe	and you
ningaxabani	lingaxabani	don't quarrel
nzabuza	ngizabuza	I will ask
ninjani?	linjani?	how are you?
kunjani eskolo?	kunjani esikolo?	how is school?
sadingi mali	ngisadingi mali	I am still looking for money

**Table 4.2 DIFFERENCES**

igqiha	udokotela	doctor
umbona	umumbu	green mealies
thetha	khuluma	talk/speak
ngoku	khathesi	now
chola	dobha	pick
ndoyika	ngiyesaba	I am afraid
molo	sabona	greetings
molweni	salibonani	greetings (many)
goduka	hamba	go
ipapa	Isitshwala	thick porridge (sadza)
amakhwenkwe	abafana	boys
yibhokwe	imbuzi	goat
ixetsha bani?	yisikhathi bani?	what time is it?
imvula	izulu	rain
yanetha izolo	linile izolo	it rained yesterday
emthini	esihlahleni	on a tree
zimbotyi	zindumba	its beans
ivatara	ikhabe	water melon
utya ntoni?	udlani?	what are you eating?
jonga	khangela	look
makhulu	gogo	grandmother
tamkhulu	babamkhulu	grandfather
makukho ngxaki	akukho nkinga	there is no problem
ewe	yebo	yes
iyagcima	iyacitsha	it switches off
sawuncokola ngomso	sizaxoxa kusasa	we will chat tomorrow
umnqojodo	isijeza (inhopi)	traditional food

uyafumana	uyathola	you find
kubonisa ukuba	kutshengisa ukuba	it seems
ulale kamnandi	ulale kahle	sleep well
asicingi	asifuni/asiqali	we won't
ufunukundiba	ufunukungintshontsha	you want to steal me
icuba liyanditsaha	igwayi liyangihitsha	snuff chocks me
igxiva	umgido wabafana	boys traditional dance
nqiba	cina	end

### Question 6

#### **Pertaining to the challenges in teaching the mixed class and how to address them:**

100% of the interviewed teachers expressed that they do face challenges of the medium of instruction and end up using both languages to explain the concepts and clarify obscurities or unfamiliar words. TEACHER B expressed that, *Teachers from Mashonaland are laughed at by the pupils when they try to speak IsiXhosa making a lot of mistakes.* Another area of challenge that was expressed by TEACHER B is that, *AmaXhosa are very secretive such that they don't live a transparent life. Their culture demands that they do not disclose details of their cultural life. This poses a problem to the teachers when they discuss cultural issues in class when pupils are supposed to share their experiences. AmaXhosa children do not openly talk about their cultural issues as if its taboo to do so.*

### Question 7

#### **Referring to availability of (appropriate) learning materials and how they were obtained:**

100% of all the interviewed teachers expressed their disappointment saying that they have no learning materials at all for IsiXhosa. TEACHER A, the specialist teacher further said, *The general Indigenous Languages syllabus available from the Ministry of Education is too broad and difficult to interpret and also does not address the needs of IsiXhosa. The textbooks on the New Curriculum have nothing on IsiXhosa. I rely on the Xhosa dictionary I obtained online.*

### **Question 8**

#### **Regarding language mixing by pupils when they speak and write their school work:**

The responses by all the three teachers constituting 100% revealed that the pupils do mix the two languages a lot in their conversations, oral and written school work. TEACHER C, the specialist teacher, highlighted that, *in IsiXhosa composition writing, there is code mixing with IsiNdebele. Words from a different language feature in the other in use. At times the interfering words are used as they are or phonologised to be pronounced in the accent of the receiving language. When it comes to writing, some spellings are spelt as in the other language. For example, where IsiNdebele word has syllables -tsh, IsiXhosa has -ty, therefore, the sound is the same and in writing the pupils often tend to mix up the spellings. As a result, their performance is poor at Grade 7 where they mostly obtain 3 to 7 symbols.*

### **Question 9**

#### **Whether there is implementation of the 2013 Constitution in the teaching of IsiXhosa:**

100% of the interviewed teachers revealed that recommendations of the constitution were being observed but not being implemented because the IsiXhosa language is not being taught in the Mbembesi schools.

### **Question 10**

#### **On what can be done to promote the teaching and learning of IsiXhosa:**

100% of all the interviewed teachers agreed that there should be a provision of syllabus as well as teaching and learning material.

### **Question 11**

#### **Regarding cultural activities they engage their students in and for which ethnic group:**

The responses from all the interviewed teachers, constituting 100% of the sample, indicated that they accommodate both ethnic groups in their dances according to the requirement of the New Competence Based Curriculum. Emqwashwini School is fairing very well in the area of cultural dances in the district and at times at provincial level as also pointed out by TEACHER A. TEACHER B reiterated that, *Actually in cultural dance competitions, our school does very well by*

*winning in the district and at times in the province. TEACHER B of Mfanyana Primary School highlighted that; the Xhosa dances include “ukukyikyimba” which is a cake song and dance and “ukugxiva” which is a circumcision celebration song and dance. Ndebele dances include “isitshikitsha”, “iwosana” and “amantshomane”. TEACHER B pointed out that, absolute cultures are diminishing as you find amaXhosa pupils dancing “isitshikitsha” or amaNdebele participating in amaXhosa dances. When there is a circumcision party or “umguyo” for amaXhosa, amaNdebele boys, who are their friends, attend at the consent of their parents. This is done in a bid to avoid segregation by ethnicity. However, TEACHER C said, amaXhosa don’t dance Ndebele traditional dances although I encourage the learners to participate in both groups’ dances.*

### **Question 12**

#### **Concerning conflicts in observing those cultural activities:**

No marked conflicts have been noted about observing cultural activities. Instead they have shown interest in each other’s language and culture with no reservations. TEACHER B confirmed this when she said that, *their harmony is marked at Mazinini and Nyathini (Mfanyana) communities where amaXhosa boys culturally carry and blow whistles as well as knobkerries which they use in their play “ukuqwaqwazana” but sometimes end up fighting. AmaNdebele boys are also seen carrying them imitating amaXhosa boys and they also play together.*

### **Question 13**

#### **Regarding what should be done to promote harmonious coexistence between the two ethnic groups:**

All the teachers interviewed constituting 100%, expressed that there is harmonious living between the two ethnic groups. TEACHER B indicated that, *if you join amaXhosa in their cultural activities when not circumcised, “amakwetha- abasanda kusokwa” seize you and forcibly circumcise you.* The term *amakwetha* refers to the boys that have just been circumcised. After circumcision they refer to the boy who was *ikhwenkwe* the term referring to one before

circumcision as *ubhuti* meaning brother because he would then be respected as a young man because he is no more a boy.

#### **Question 14**

**Concerning what else could be said about the relationship of these two ethnic groups:**

Nothing significant was given on this open question.

#### **4.2.2.2 Remarks on findings**

This area is inhabited by amaXhosa predominantly and amaNdebele, but due to the Doke recommendation of 1931 IsiXhosa was denied recognition and development. Instead, IsiNdebele was promoted as *lingua franca* of Matabeleland as well as the language for education in the region to foster hegemony. The pupils however, relate in harmony without any conflicts at all. It is normal and natural that children befriend anyone they encounter regardless of tribe as long as they interact on common grounds. They are not as tribalistic as adults.

Mainly IsiNdebele is used since it is the one learnt in class. IsiNdebele thus assumes a dominant role.

Estudiante (2004:112) explains social dominance as follows:

*Social dominance is related to the perceived status of a group in relation to another. If it is culturally, politically, socially and economically superior or inferior over the target group, there might be resistance in learning the target language. If both groups are equal, less social distance and better conditions to learn.*

The quotation emphasises that when there is a stronger and a weaker group in a society, the stronger dominates the weaker in all aspects of life, which might create resistance in language learning by the weaker group. Language is used as a tool for domination; therefore, the weaker group would be forced to speak the language of the stronger group. However, it is not the case with amaXhosa of Mbembesi and probably other parts of Zimbabwe because they have learnt IsiNdebele and ChiShona without any resistance.



The Doke recommendation of 1931 put IsiNdebele at an advantageous position. It has taken too long to have the other formerly marginalised groups to have their languages raised in status. However, an effort has been made through the 2013 Constitution which is commendable. It is hoped that if it could be implemented fully, it could make every language enjoy its right of existence.

English is the main medium of instruction for all other subjects. But as alluded to earlier, IsiNdebele is being taught as a subject while IsiXhosa is not. Since examinations are written in IsiNdebele, it is apparent that the language is used in order for the pupils to be proficient in it in preparation for their examinations at Grade 7. It is necessary that it be taught effectively. This tends to marginalise the indigenous IsiXhosa which is not given space in the school curriculum.

Hammer (2017) claims that if two groups have cultural values that are very similar it is easier to learn the new language. This applies to the two groups under study because amaXhosa and amaNdebele share a lot of common cultural values stemming from their common Nguni origin. As a result, amaXhosa children find it manageable to learn IsiNdebele at school though it would have been more preferable to learn their own language.

Berry (1980) describes social distance as concerning the extent to which individual learners can identify themselves with members of a target language group and thereby achieve contact with them. Berry (1980) further describes psychological distance as the extent to which individual learners are at ease with their target language learning task. Since IsiNdebele is the language learnt at school, it becomes the target language for amaXhosa.

It is apparent that teachers in Mbembesi ought to be bilingual in order to be able to explain the terms and concepts they would be teaching. However, teachers come from different parts of the country with their various indigenous languages yet they are expected to speak the languages of the area so as to fit well into the community. Their duties would also be carried out with less difficulty if they were able to use the language of that area.

One wonders how teachers of language are expected to teach without learning materials. This is no wonder that the program was abandoned. It lacked support. The teachers could not handle the classes without a guide. Even if they tried to use the Indigenous Languages syllabus, it would not reflect amaXhosa culture and their language since there are quite a number of differences in various ethnic groups. The fact that the pupils speak IsiXhosa at home and learn IsiNdebele at school has a negative effect on their performance as the home language interferes with the school language. It also came out that some of the pupils have a negative attitude towards IsiNdebele language that is forced on them. However, TEACHER B said that some of amaXhosa pupils have mastered IsiNdebele clearly better than amaNdebele themselves who are the owners of the language. The teachers are available and willing to teach but there is no resource material. An attempt was made to teach the language but the program was aborted along the way due to lack of proper guidance and learning materials.

It was established that the teaching of IsiXhosa at the two pilot schools was done from 2013 to 2015 and was then abandoned as they reverted to the teaching of IsiNdebele from 2016. The reasons put forward were that there were no teaching materials and that the program lacked continuity as teachers who taught the pupils from Grade 1 would move with their class into Grade 2 and 3, leaving no one to fill up the gap in Grade 1. Meanwhile, as the teacher moved back to Grade 1, no one would continue with the pupils to the upper grades. No IsiXhosa learning materials were available. Teachers only relied on IsiNdebele materials which they translated into IsiXhosa. Though the teaching was done in IsiXhosa, the testing in Indigenous Language was done in IsiNdebele, defeating the whole purpose. The teachers from Mashonaland who came to teach in Mbembesi were laughed at by the pupils when they tried to speak IsiXhosa or IsiNdebele because they were not proficient in the two languages.

In addition, the teachers advocated for the provision of specialist teachers who have been trained to teach IsiXhosa from primary up to university level just like what has been done in the other formerly marginalised languages. They wonder why IsiXhosa was not included in the UNICEF program that was training teachers of the formerly marginalised languages at

institutions of higher learning such as Joshua Mqabuko Polytechnic and Great Zimbabwe University.

Generally cultural adherence is strong among amaXhosa in all the schools. For instance, parents would rather sacrifice for their children to celebrate *umguyo* for circumcision than for their education as pointed out by TEACHER B. AmaNdebele elders also traditionally used to carry knobkerries. So the carrying of knobkerries by amaNdebele and amaXhosa boys is just a resuscitation of their culture as well. Mfanyana and Maqaqeni are at the boundary between Ntabazinduna under the Ndebele chief Ndiweni and Mbembesi is under chief Ndondo a Xhosa. On the contrary, TEACHER C pointed out that at school, amaXhosa pupils are said to dislike participating in amaNdebele traditional dances despite the fact that the teachers encourage them to take part in both groups' dances and they continue to encourage them to do so.

The researcher learnt that there is harmonious living at school as learners are seen taking after each other's cultures. For example, as alluded above, amaNdebele pupils are now also seen carrying knobkerries and blowing whistles like their amaXhosa counterparts, a thing that they were not doing in the past. Also some amaNdebele boys take part in the circumcision together with amaXhosa boys who are their friends. The results show that there is a strong impact on each other.

It is on record that both amaXhosa and amaNdebele mix well. They understand each other's language and cultural activities. Even the parents are supportive of their activities in the school and in the community. Notwithstanding this, there are some parents who have a negative attitude towards the program of learning IsiXhosa because they think that the language cannot be taken beyond community level. Such parents only need conscientisation on the benefits of having it up to the level where the other indigenous languages have reached. However, the majority of the elders want to see the development of the language especially in the education system.

### 4.3 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The researcher went on to view the syllabus and schemes of work but not much was found of any help since the syllabus is a national syllabus for Indigenous Languages and IsiNdebele is being taught instead of IsiXhosa. Notwithstanding, the researcher asked the Xhosa teacher to give her pupils a short composition to be written in IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele by the same pupils. This was done in order to ascertain the real comparison of the two languages and also to gauge the pupils' performance in both languages. The topic was *Isikolo sam* in IsiXhosa and *Isikolo sami* in IsiNdebele, where they were to describe their school and all that takes place there. Some interesting issues were picked without necessarily writing the whole essay. The following are the excerpts from a Grade 7 class. Only seven pupils' work has been included and taken exactly as it is with their mistakes. Even the English translations were made with those errors.

#### **Pupil A**

##### **IsiXhosa**

*Silamafulawuzi aluhlaza angani tshoko. Sinezithelo Andizange ndasibona Isikolo esinjenge sam bangusinhle njoba abantwana besikolo sam bangusinhle bayaxasa nithi bayahlonipha amatitshara nabantu basemuzi. Lesikolo sam sinamathoyilethi apendwe ngependa eyelo. Esikolo sam kunenkukhu. Esikolweni sidlala ibora. Siyobaleka ngoMvulo sihamba emhlonitshweni futhi esikolweni sinxiba iminqalazi nezihlangu ezimunyama. Sipheza ukufundana ngolwesihlanu siqalse ngoMvulo abomvu. esikolweni silima amaonyeni nezithelo. Esikolweni kunempompi ezinintsi neto zolahlela idothi. Thina abantwana sinawethu angusixhenxhe. Zinintsi izikolo ezinhle kodwa ndiphuma neMqwashwini. Silima umbona ibumandi lendatyana yesikolo samu. Sina necalele kuthiwa yi ST Bedes Anglican.*

##### **English translation**

We have very green flowers. We have fruits I have never seen a school like mine in beauty since pupils at my school are good and supportive and respect teachers and visitors. My school has toilets painted in yellow paint. At my school are chickens. At school we play netball. We line up for assembly on Monday and also at school we wear hats and black shoes. We finish lessons on

Friday and start on red Monday. at school we plant onions and fruits. At school there are many tapes and dust bins to throw rubbish. We, school pupils have our own seven. There are many beautiful schools but I single out Mqwashwini. We plant maize it is a good essay about my school. We have a church called ST Bedes Anglican.

### **IsiNdebele**

*Sifundiswa ngunkosazana M omuhle ikangathi yisigqoko sikamakoti santo silamaluba. Ende kuyafundwa kulesisikolo kulezinye izikolo zeMbembesi. Abadala baqinisile nxa besithi imfundo kayipheli kuphela abantu ngiqinisile ngithi kini sihle isikolo sami. Ende nxa kubhadalwa imali yesikolo uzathola endlini kamphathi kulenqumbi yenkalakatha yemali. Isikolo sami ngingaqeda ukubala imihloliso eqakathekileyo ngizakukhumbula.*

### **English translation**

We are taught by Mrs M who is as beautiful a bridal dress there are flowers. And there is good education in this school more than other schools in Mbembesi. The elders are true when they say education is endless only people end I honestly say to you my school is beautiful. And when fees is being paid you find in the head's office heaps of money. I will remember my school after finishing writing my crucial examinations.

### **Pupil B**

### **IsiXhosa**

*Ziningi izikolo apha eMbembesi kodwa umna ndizabhala ngesikolo endifunda kuso ndiyasithanda Isikolo sam ngoba sihle kakhulu kunazozonke izikolo apha kulendawo. Igama lesikolo sam yiMqwashwini. Kunamafulawuzi ahlaza tyoko namanye amhlophe athe qhwa. Xa abantu begqitha phambi kwaso besiya ekilnika bayasincoma bethi yo asesihle ke bakithi nkosi yam. Kunamatitshara amangutheni nabantwana angusithiyagalombili. Ndiyazigqaja ngesikolo sam. Xa sivela uyodla siyalayina sihambe siyofunda erumini apha okuhlala kona acomputer lezinye indawo ezehlukeneyo. Intwana esifunda nazo ziyamamela ngoba zafundiswe ukuba nembeko asicingi zidelele abantu abadala ngoba utishara uyazibetha ngunduko. Sinothe*

*esikolweni sifuyile inkukhu ibhokwe nomvundla egcinwayo bayayinika ukudla namanzi ngezinye imini ziyake phumaphume. Alala ha! alalaha ndiyakuthanda skolo sam.*

### **English translation**

There are many schools here in Mbembesi but I will write about the school where I learn I love my school because it is the most beautiful of all schools in this area. The name of my school is Mqwashwini. There are very green flowers and other very white ones. When people pass by as they go to the clinic they admire it saying oh what a beautiful school my lord. There are ten teachers and eight pupils. I am proud of my school. When we come from lunch we line up and go to learn in the computer lab and other various places. The school pupils that we learn with listen because they have been molded in character so they do not disrespect the elders because the teacher hits them with a knobkerrie. We are rich at school we rear chickens goats and rabbits that are kept and fed with food and water and other times they go out around. Alala ha!alalaha I love my school.

### **IsiNdebele**

*Lapha eZimbabwe zinengi izikolo kodwa mina ngizathanda ukubhala ngesikolo sami esihlanzekileyo esihle okhumangalisayo. Lapha eMbembesi zinengi izikolo ezimangalisayo kodwa mina ngithi lesi siyamangalisa. Khulamaluba abomvu gebhu njalo futhi ahlanzekile. Sipendwe ngependi emhlophe nke engani luchango. thina lapha esikolo sethu sikhuluma IsiXhosa. Khulambalisi abanengi. Khulenkukhu ezimnyama tshu. Khulebhasi elobala omhlophe nke ekhulu okhumangalisayo. Khulamakilasi alitshumi lane njalo futhi ahlanzekile. Khile play centre yabo grade zero. Ngiyasithanda Isikolo sami ngoba khule fundo. Siyahamba emasiphotshi sisiyandlala imindlalo eminengi ehlukeneyo.*

### **English translation**

Here in Zimbabwe there are many schools but I would like to write about my school that is smart and very beautiful. Here in Mbembesi there are many very awesome schools but I say this is awesome. There are very red flowers and are smart. It is painted in paint that is bright as white as milk. here at our school we speak IsiXhosa. There are many teachers. There are very black chickens. There is a very white big bus. There are fourteen smart classes. There is a play

centre for grade zero. I love my school because there is education. We go for sports to play various games.

### **Pupil C**

#### **IsiXhosa**

*Sihle siyakhangeleka. Sipentwe ngepentu egreen tshoko. Sinamatishara amangu tetini amaningi alunge kakhulu. Singena ngo 7 ekuseni kakhulu. Siphume ngo 4 emini. Senza tumidlalo eminingi. Abantwana besikolo sam basisimati. Sikha amanzi empompini. Ndiyawethi kakhulu amatishara wesikolo sami. Kuyathengiswa yonke into. Kunamdlalo wo ECD. Asiyithandi indawo encolileyo. Silimile amatamatisi nombhida nezinye izinto aziningi. Sihle shemu shemanana nxa ndisikhangele inhliziyu yamu iyapinsama njalo futhi iyathaba. Sicecisiwe nansika engiyithini egeyithini. Koko endathwetshulwa yingwe andikaze ndibone isikolo esihle njengeMqwashwini.*

#### **English translation**

It is beautiful and smart. It is painted in very green paint. It has thirteen many very good teachers. We start school at 7 in the morning. We dismiss at 4 in the afternoon. We do many games. Pupils at my school are smart. We fetch water from tapes. I love teachers of my school very much. Everything is sold at my school. There are games for ECD. We do not like a dirty place. We have planted tomatoes and vegetables and other many things. It is beautiful shame when I look at it my heart longs and rejoice. It is decorated at the gate. Ever since I was born I have never seen a school as beautiful as Mqwashwini.

#### **IsiNdebele**

*Amathoyilethi ayisikhombisa. Sifuya amatsiyane nenkukhu. Sidlala amabhola siyagijima. Siggoka amayunifomu aluhlaza lezingwani eziluhlaza. ngoMvulo sihamba emalayinini langolwesihlanu. Kulotshani oluhlaza tshoko. Esikolo sihlanyela amavegitheblu lamafrutsi. Kulezimpompi ezinengi lamabhimu. Waze wamuhle sikolo sami angazi ukuthi ngizakufanisa lani.*

### English translation

The toilets are seven. We rear chicks and chickens. We play ball games and athletics. We wear green uniforms and green hats. on Monday and Friday we line up for assembly. There is very green grass. At school we plant vegetables and fruits. There are many tapes and dust bins. How beautiful you are my school I do not know what I can compare you with.

### Pupil D

#### IsiXhosa

*Siclean kakhulu. Sipentwe ngepentu egreen ingathi yingca yenkomo. Igeyithi ipentwe ngepentu emnyama tshu ingathi ngumtswankela. Siphekelwa umqa onekhabitshi enamamatamatisi avuthisayo athe tshwe. Isikolo sam sicacisiwe ngamafulawuzi amamhlophe qhwa. Sinecawe sine ground apho esidlalela khona. Neflegi yezwe iahlonitshwa. Egadini silime umfino namamatamatisi nombona ogreen tshoko. Thina ograde 7 siyayidlala ibhora. Singcekile kakhulu.*

### English translation

It is very clean. It is painted in green paint like cattle food. The gate is painted in very black paint as black as wild fruit. They cook for us sadza and cabbage with ripe tomatoes. My school is decorated with very white flowers. We have a church we have a playground. The national flag is honoured. At the garden we have planted vegetables and tomatoes and very green mealies. We grade 7 pupils play netball. We are very smart.

### IsiNdebele

*Izambuzi zihlanzekile. Kulababalisi abalitshumi labantwana abangamatshumi ayisitshiyagalo latshumi. Ngiyaziqhenya ngesikolo sami. Siyafuya imivundla, imbuzi, ingulube lenkukhu zamaqanda lenkukhu zenyama. Thina sifunda esikolo esiphezulu ngiyabona ngathwetshulwa yingwe. Baqinisile abadala nxa besithi imali yimpande yesono. Alala! alala! sihle ngempela isikolo lesi he! he yindlela yona leyi kambe yibuhle bani lobu. Banesimulo abantwana.*

### English translation

Toilets are clean. There are ten teachers and pupils that are tens .... (Inaccurate representation of a figure). I am proud of my school. We rear rabbits, goats, pigs and chicken layers and for



meat. We are in a higher class I see I was born. The elders are true when they say money is the root of all evil. Alala! alala! indeed this school is very beautiful he! is this the way what kind of beauty is this. The pupils have a good character.

#### **Pupil E**

##### **IsiXhosa**

*Inkukhu zuyazalela amaqanda. Sinxiba impahla. Amantombazana anxiba eziluhlaza amakhwenkwe anxiba ezibomvu gebhu. Ndithetha , ndiqeqile kuphela umufu. Ndithi ndikhanye nembula ndivele ndivuye ingaphakathi ndizive ndikhudumala. Sinjalo kasithandi kufundekela sihlala sithule zwi. Ndiyasithanda ngoba umna ujonya pantsi uvele ucinge umakoti etsheniselwe umyeni. Umphathisikolo ngu nkosazana Masuku othanda ukujonga mulanga wonke. Ndivela ndicinge imvula inetha. Okuzawuhlala kukhona kuze kube nininini.*

##### **English translation**

Chickens lay eggs. We wear uniforms. Girls wear green ones and boys wear very red ones. I talk, I am used to clouds. When I look back I feel happy and warm inside. That is how we are we do not like noise we are always quiet. I love it because I look down for a bride dressed for her bridegroom. The head is Ms Masuku who likes inspecting every day. I look for rain falling. It is the eternal situation.

##### **IsiNdebele**

*Kulomumbu oluhlaza tshoko. Sidlala ibhola lenyawo lelezandla. Kuyaphekwa isitshwala kucentiwe utshani. Kulenkonxa yamanzi yokuthelela engadini. Isikolo sami sihle engathi lilanga liphuma. Kamuhle nje litshatshazi. Baqinisile abadala nxa besithi induku enhle iganyulwa ezizweni. Ababalisi bayisitshiyagalolunye. Lanxa ngilele ngibona abayezi ngijabule ngaphakathi ngizizwe ngikhudumala. Sihlala sithule zwi. Ucabange umakoti ececiselwe umyeni. Kuzahlala kuze kube phakade.*

##### **English translation**

There are very green mealies. We play football and netball. Sadza is cooked yard weeding is done. There is a bucket of water used for watering the garden. My school is as beautiful as

sunrise. It is very cute like a blister. The elders are true when they say a good knobkerrie is found afar. Teachers are nine. Even in my sleep I see clouds and rejoice and feel warm inside. We are always very quiet. You think of a bride dressed for her bridegroom. The situation will remain eternal.

#### **Pupil F**

##### **IsiXhosa**

*Kunezindlu ehlukeneyo zophatsoleka zinintsi zingutwelufe kunegadi yolima nokuhlanti kweivundla. Abantwana zibanitsi kakhulu. Ndiyancama sibangu 393 kuneloni. Izindlu zokufunda zingu twenty. Amhlophe nke njengelokhwa kamakoti. Sihle siyancomeka. Abantu abadala banyanisile nxa besithi imfundo ayipheli kuphela umuntu qha. Nxa fubhatalwa esikolweni kuphuma imali enitshi gqithi. Sihamba emhlonitshweni ngoMvulo.*

##### **English translation**

There are various buildings with classes as many as twelve there is a garden for farming and rabbits' food. Pupils are very many. I think we are 393 there is a loan. There are twenty classrooms. They are as white as the bride's bridegroom. It is very beautiful and admirable. Elders are true when they say education is endless a person ends absolutely. When fees are paid at the school a lot of money is collected. We go for assembly on Monday.

##### **IsiNdebele**

*Abantwana banengi kakhulu. Kulenkukhu ezimnyama tshu. Khule fundo. Siyandlala imindlalo eminengi ehlukeneyo. Ababalisi bangagqoka kuhle. Baqinisile abandala. Inkukhu sezibekela amaqanda. Kulezambuzi zabafana lezamankazana. Ababalisi bafundisa kuhle, siyabazwisisa nxa befundisa.*

##### **English translation**

Pupils are very many. There are very black chickens. There is education. We play many various games. Teachers dress well. Elders are true. Chickens now lay eggs. There are boys and girls toilets. Teachers teach well, we understand them when they teach.

## **Pupil G**

### **IsiXhosa**

*Sipendwe ngependi ekhazimulayo. Nx ndisiza kuzo ndijonga amafu qha. Umhle njengetshatshazi. banyanisile abadala besithi umqwayi omhle uganyulwa emazweni. Sinabantwana abamamelayo. Ngaphakathi kwamaklasi ujonga amatshat ubone ubuhle kubuqabanga. Ndize ndithi nanxa ndiqeqile kufike amafu. Sithetha isiXhosa lesiNdebele eklasini. Abantu bayamagala bathi kuthiwa yintoni? Siyabukhekha.*

### **English translation**

It is painted with glittering paint. When I go there I see real clouds. You are as beautiful as a blister. Elders are true when they say a good rod is found afar. There are pupils who listen. Inside classrooms you see charts and see real beauty. When I am conscious I see clouds. We speak in IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele in class. People are amazed say what kind? It is admirable.

### **IsiNdebele**

*Amaluba aluhlaza ntshoko. Angisoze ngisikhohlwe. Kulenkukhu ezimunyama.*

### **English translation**

Flowers are very green. I will never forget it. There are black chickens.

#### **4.3.1 Remarks from the transcripts**

The two languages have impacted on each other to a great extent. The similarities between them have been dealt with extensively above. In the passages given, IsiXhosa of the pupils seems to heavily rely on English more than IsiNdebele does. They phonologise the English loan words like *amafulawuzi* for flowers, while IsiNdebele has *amaluba amathoyilethi* for toilets, while IsiNdebele has *izambuzi* and *idothi* for dirt, while IsiNdebele has *ingcekeza*. The pupils seem to have problems in writing proper languages especially IsiNdebele that is examinable. At times IsiXhosa words are used in place of the Ndebele ones. Pupil E wrote a very deep IsiXhosa which is not easily understood.

Punctuation is still lacking in some of the pupils. You find a series of unrelated sentences with different ideas not separated by punctuations. The orthography in the two languages differs to

a certain extent but a lot of terms are common. When they write IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa vocabulary interferes since it is their first language they spoke before speaking IsiNdebele. In IsiXhosa, vowels can follow each other as in *amaonyeni* by pupil A but in IsiNdebele they are separated by a hyphen if it involves English words like, *ama-onyeni* or the vowels are separated by a semi-vowel as in pupil D who wrote *iahlonitshwa* in IsiXhosa while IsiNdebele would have it as *iyahlonitshwa* with a semi-vowel -y separating the consecutive vowels.

The consonant -h is used where it is not supposed to be used and left out where it is supposed to be used like by pupil B who writes *ibhasi ekhulu* when it is supposed to be *enkulu*, *khulababalisi* instead of *kulababalisi*, *Siyabukhekha* should be *siyabukeka* without -h-consonant. Where -h is left out is in pupil A, who writes *ukubala imihloliso* instead of *ukubhala imihloliso*. Pupil A writes *indatyana* where IsiNdebele has *indatshana* where -ty is used in place of -tsh.

Concords have not yet been mastered where you find a sentence not in agreement, for example, pupil C says *utshani oluluhlaza* instead of *utshani obuluhlaza*. Pupil E writes *Abantwana zibanitsi* in IsiXhosa instead of *sibanitsi* for *abantwana sibanengi* in siNdebele. Moods of the verb are sometimes not properly used, for example, pupil F says *Ababalisi bangagqoka kuhle* expressing a potential mood of the verb instead of *Ababalisi bagqoka kuhle* to imply that they dress properly. Some terms used in IsiXhosa are common in IsiZulu and not used in IsiNdebele, for example, *umfino* for vegetables while IsiNdebele has *umbhida*, and *amafu* for clouds while IsiNdebele has *amayezi* and *mamela* for listen while IsiNdebele has *lalela*.

There are some expressions that are similar in the two languages like the following:

*Ziyazalela amaqanda*, in pupil E IsiXhosa, is equivalent to *ziyabekela amaqanda* in IsiNdebele. It means they lay eggs. *Mulanga wonke*, in IsiXhosa, is for *Malanga wonke* in IsiNdebele. It means daily or every day. Pupil C writes *Koko endathwetshulwa yingwe* in IsiXhosa for *Selokhe ngathwetshulwa yingwe* in IsiNdebele. It means ever since I was born. Pupil G writes *Nx ndisiza kuzo* in IsiXhosa for *Nxa ngisiza kuso* in IsiNdebele. It means when I come to it. The similarities point to the origins of the languages that they share the same parent isiNguni.

The pupils are fond of expressing ideas through figures of speech. Colours are expressed in various idiophones which have been properly mustered such as *gebhu* for red, *tshu* for black, *tshoko/ntshoko/tyoko* for green, *nke* and *qhwa* for white. Numbers cannot be expressed properly in siNdebele and what they say becomes meaningless. Idioms used to describe the school are normally used to refer to people like *litshatshazi* and the simile *njengelanga liphuma or njengomakoti etsheniselwe umyeni*. They are not befitting here. They have a tendency of overusing proverbs such that some of them become irrelevant to the concepts expressed. For example, *Imali yimpande yesono* meaning “Money is the root of all evil”, which is irrelevant here. It is a Biblical verse that has been misquoted. It should read: “The love of money is the root of all evil”. Some proverbs are expressed differently like *Umqwqyi omuhle uganyulwa emazweni* instead of *Induku enhle iganyulwa ezizweni*. Proverbs should never be changed their form. This partly explains why they are not doing so well in their Grade 7 IsiNdebele examination. This is the very class that is going to write Grade 7 ZIMSEC examination in October 2019. With such performance, one is bound to conclude that they won’t compete well with L1 IsiNdebele speakers.

The positive thing is that they could vividly describe their school and what happened there. They love their school, the buildings, and their teachers, how smart and well behaved they are as well as the projects that they did in the school. There were a lot of agricultural activities that were going on. Sporting activities were also taken seriously. They are also abreast with computer technology. They have been converted to Christianity and have been molded their characters culturally to respect the elders. From their compositions, it has been noted that both languages are used in the school and in class although IsiNdebele still dominates as a subject in the curriculum even though the desire is to have IsiXhosa as a standalone subject in the school curriculum.

#### 4.4 COMPARISON WITH ISIXHOSA OF SOUTH AFRICA

Below is a comparison of IsiXhosa of Mbembesi and that of South Africa as presented by Dr Spofana the co-supervisor showing some differences of spelling caused by the way they speak which has digressed from the standard Xhosa due to the fact that the Mfengu variety is not standard Xhosa and also the impact of their contact with amaNdebele and probably other factors as well:

**Table 4.3 Comparison of Zimbabwean and South African IsiXhosa**

<b>Mbembesi</b>	<b>South Africa</b>	<b>English</b>
me	umama	mother
nintsi	ninz / ninji	many
kancinci	kancinyane	a little bit
mauti	xa uthi /xa usithi	when you say
kuthwa	kuthiwa	it is said
izifundi	izifundiswa	the elite / learned ones
ekhayeni	ekhaya	at home
uzandixolela	uza kundixolela	you will pardon me
ukukyikyimba	ukutyityimba	cultural dance song
umamamu	umama wam	my mother
umngqusho	umngqusho	samp
umxhaxha	umxhaxha	type of traditional food
nzabuza	ndiza kubuza	I will ask
kunjani eskolo?	kunjani esikolweni?	how is school?
sadingi mali	ndisadinga imali	I am still looking for money
ugqiha	ugqirha	doctor
ndoyika	ndiyoyika	I am afraid
yibhokhwe	ibhokhwe	goat

ixetsha bani?	lithini ixesha?	what time is it?)
yenetha izolo	yana izolo	it rained yesterday
zimbotyi	ziimbotyi	it is beans
ivatara	ivatala	water melon
umakhulu	umakhulu	grandmother
utamkhulu	utamkhulu/utatomkhulu	grandfather
umakukho ngxaki	xa kukho ingxaki	if there is a problem
makukho ngxaki	kukho ingxaki	there is a problem
iyagcima	iyacima	it switches off
sawuncokola ngomso	sakuncokola ngomso	we will chat tomorrow
ufunukundiba	ufuna ukundiba	you want to steal me
icuba liyanditsaha	icuba liyanditsarha	snuff chokes me
inkcubeko	inkcubeko	culture
nqiba	gqiba	end

#### 4.4.1 Discussion of findings on language comparison

Findings on this kaleidoscopic cultural terrain depict differences in the demonstrative suffix, orthography and spelling. The word *ekhayeni* instead of *ekhaya* is a demonstrative in which *-eni* is usually a suffix for demonstratives in IsiNdebele like *egangeni* built from *iganga* a bush, so the demonstrative means in the bush. AmaXhosa then tend to over use the suffix even where it is uncalled for. The pupils wrote the wrong spellings because of the influence of IsiNdebele. What the Xhosa of Mbembesi call *ukukyikyimba* is said to be *ukutyityimba* in standard Xhosa of South Africa meaning a cultural song and dance for a wedding celebration. In IsiNdebele the word *ukutshitshimba* means to dance. *Ukukikimba* in IsiNdebele means to ululate which is done by women when people are dancing. Now since *-ty* in IsiXhosa represents *-tsh* in IsiNdebele, so the IsiNdebele word is the equivalent for the standard Xhosa showing some digression in the Mbembesi Xhosa from that of South Africa. AmaXhosa of Mbembesi say *amakwetha- abasanda kusokwa* while the standard Xhosa says *abakhwetha abasandulu ukusokwa* meaning those that have just been circumcised. The difference is a result of language contact with IsiNdebele in

Mbembesi. Their spelling of *ikhwenkwe* should be *inkwenkwe* according to standard Xhosa of South Africa meaning a boy that has not yet been circumcised. The pupils wrote *sibanitsi* instead of *sibaninzi/sibaninji* because of the digression due to their contact with amaNdebele.

Other spelling differences have been noticed even from adults such as *ugqiha* instead of *ugqirha*. The pupils were writing IsiNdebele idiophones instead of IsiXhosa idiophones as observed in colours of red where they wrote *gebhu* instead of *krwe*. For black they wrote *tshu* instead of *thsu* and for green they wrote *tshoko* instead of *yaka*. This implies that they have used IsiNdebele idiophones in class and they have to write what they are to be examined in since IsiXhosa is not learnt in the schools. Or it could be that their language has been heavily influenced by IsiNdebele such that they have adopted those Ndebele idiophones. They have created terms unknown to the standard Xhosa users, for example, *umnqojodo* which is a traditional food equivalent to *isijeza* or *inhopi* in IsiNdebele. The word *inhopi* is originally a Kalanga word that was adopted by amaNdebele. They also have a tendency of syncopating their speeches instead of speaking the full elongated utterances, for example, *sadingi mali* instead of *ndisadinga imali*. However, most of the words are similar indicating a strong background of South African origin.

Spofana (2011), in his study of the influence of IsiXhosa varieties on English, highlighted that isiGcaleka variety is the standard Xhosa used in prescribed books for learners in schools, in government spheres and media. It therefore follows that IsiMfengu spoken in Mbembesi is not standard Xhosa. The other varieties he included are IsiBhaca, IsiHlubi, isiMpondo and isiThembu in addition to isiGcaleka. Of particular interest to the researcher is IsiHlubi variety in comparison with IsiNdebele of Zimbabwe that has been added in the comparison but not in the original researcher's work. The following is an extract from Spofana (2011)'s research findings:



**Table 4.4 Comparison of IsiHlubi (Xhosa variety) and IsiNdebele**

IsiXhosa (standard)	IsiHlubi (variety)	IsiNdebele	English
tshisa	shisa	tshisa	burn
umngxuma	isigodi	igodi	hole
krwada	luhlaza	luhlaza	raw
ukuzala	ukugcwala	ukugcwala	to be full
ukusela	ukunatha	ukunatha	to drink
ukhuko	igcantsi	icansi	traditional mat
utywala	ijiki	utshwala	alcohol
ziyahlambana	ziyagezana	ziyagezana	wash each other

It is interesting to note that IsiHlubi and IsiNdebele are mutually intelligible because Mzilikazi had amaHlubi as part of his area of recruit in South Africa together with amaZulu as he left South Africa for Zimbabwe when he was forming his Ndebele nation. The standard Xhosa is different from the Ndebele of Zimbabwe except for a few words like *tshisa* that is the same and some consonants with similar phonology but different spelling as in *-ty* and *-tsh* that are pronounced the same though differently spelt.

Another area that Spofana (2011) looked at is topics that were taught in class which included the following:

**Table 4.5 Comparison of topics**

IsiXhosa	IsiNdebele	English
lingoma	Izingoma	Songs
linkalakahliso	Ukulwangisa	Palatalization
Isimelabizo sokukhomba	Isabizwana sokukhomba	Demonstrative pronoun
Izaci namaqhalo	Izitsho lezaga	Idioms and proverbs
Uncwadi lwemveli	Umbhalo wendulo	Traditional literature

There is a small degree of mutual intelligibility on the cited topics. The comparison of the two languages from the selected examples show the sharp differences in lexical items except for two words iingoma (IsiXhosa) and izingoma (IsiNdebele) where double initial vowel-*ii* prefix in IsiXhosa represents plural while IsiNdebele has - *izi* for plural of-*i* prefix and sokukhomba is the same in both languages.

The students were also asked to write a short essay on the topic: *Kutheni kufuneka ndifunde IsiXhosa?* (IsiXhosa). *Kungani kufuneka/kusweleka ngifunde IsiXhosa?* (IsiNdebele). Why should I learn Xhosa? This topic shows great mutual intelligibility in the two languages except for the first word which is different and also there is a difference between concords for the verb in question.

#### **4.4.2 Discussion of findings on topics**

IsiXhosa of Mbembesi which is a Fingo dialect is regarded as a non-standard Xhosa. Myers-Scotton (1992:6), in Harton and Bullock (2007) affirms that, “Non-standard dialects are those varieties which are not written”. It is unfortunate, therefore that “standard” sometimes has the connotation of “acceptable” and “non-standard” that connotation of “sub-standard”. He further notes that, this is the prejudice the Lyons (1984:25) warns against, since historically there is no difference between them. Given the above scenario, in IsiXhosa, the Pondo, Tembu

and Fingo dialects are regarded as “non-standard” IsiXhosa. The assertion implies that IsiXhosa of Mbembesi which is a Fingo dialect is sub-standard.

Language change of IsiXhosa is a result of its contact with IsiNdebele. Hachipola (1998) notes that the majority of minority languages are situated in Matabeleland and it would be expected many mutual influences between IsiNdebele and these languages at the level of vocabulary, phonology and some other aspects. This can be said of IsiXhosa’s mutual influence with IsiNdebele in the same way.

IsiXhosa that is now spoken in Mbembesi has changed from the standard one that is spoken in South Africa as observed from the given comparison above. Mamabolo (2005) quotes Langacker (1967:179) speaking about language change saying, *Living languages never hold still. Every language is the product of change and continues to change as long as it is spoken.* Mamabolo (2005) also quotes Wikes (1996) in his research paper on “Language Contact and Change” who referred to Robins (1967) and Aitchison (1999) who claim that the prime external motivator of language change is areal contact in the case of Sepedi and Setswana in contact with Southern Transvaal Ndebele. It means an area where people stay becomes the external force of their language change more than the other internal factors which may cause their language change. If they happen to change an area they also get affected by the new area.

In this study it is amaXhosa in contact with amaNdebele in Mbembesi that caused a change in IsiXhosa that was spoken while they were still in South Africa. Mamabolo (2005)’s research revealed that lack of reference material like dictionary, language books which are grammar books, and traditional publications pose challenges to teachers who are inadequately trained and equipped. He notes that there is need for newspapers and magazines as reading material. It can be said of the same with amaXhosa teachers in Mbembesi.

AmaXhosa children were forced to be bilingual in order to go through their education. They speak IsiXhosa at home and IsiNdebele at school as they learn it as a subject. This scenario explains why they spelt some Xhosa words using Ndebele spellings. From their pieces of written work, it has been observed that they were writing IsiNdebele idiophones and proverbs mainly

because they have learnt those from class which was expected for their examinations. The teachers were also forced to be bilingual in order to accommodate the two languages speakers in their mixed classes.

In relation with the given situation, Govender (2010) asserts that children are required to negotiate difficult transitions between home and school which is terrifying for young children with home language different from classroom. He has this to say: *Subtractive bilingualism, when the L2 is learned at the expense of the child's L1 or when learners lose their L1 as it is replaced by an L2* (Adams & Jones 2005:20); in Govender (2010) often occurs when the L1 is not valued and supported by the education system. It is likewise generally agreed that subtractive bilingualism has a negative effect on a child's social and cognitive development and is believed to be culturally alienating and harmful to the child, effectively cutting off the child's traditional and cultural roots and destroying the child's sense of identity. It is true of amaXhosa of Mbembesi who speak IsiXhosa at home but learn IsiNdebele at school and find themselves attaining low grades in IsiNdebele because their social and cognitive development would have been affected. Furthermore, when they learn they would be culturally alienated as they would be learning things that they do not practice at home. This is the reason why we saw some pupils writing IsiNdebele idiophones and proverbs that at times are inaccurate or irrelevant because the figurative language would not be part of their language and culture.

Govender (2010) further claims that an impressive number of research studies have documented that cognitive processes work less efficiently through the additional language. Comprehension tasks take about twice as long in the L2 as in the L1, and production tasks (tasks that require the learner to produce creative language through speech or writing) take about three times as long. The written compositions by the pupils are a clear demonstration of such a poor performance as a result of cognitive processes working less efficiently. In this regard, it has been noted that amaXhosa children at Mbembesi primary schools perform poorly in IsiNdebele Grade 7 examinations due to the fact that they are not using their L1 in the classroom as a subject of study nor medium of instruction.

Govender (2010) solidifies his claim by referring to the following project that Luckett (1995:75) reports on South African research on the Threshold Project (1990). The research has reflected that many Black learners suffer ill effects of subtractive bilingualism owing to the sudden change over from first to second language medium of instruction. The Project found that learners could not explain in English what they already know in their L1; nor could they transfer into their L1 the new knowledge they have learnt through English. The results of the research indicated that learners had failed to achieve CALP in either language. The same claim can be made for the current research that the children are failing to achieve good results in IsiNdebele which is their L2 owing to their change over from IsiXhosa which is their L1.

#### **4.5 FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH ELDERS IN MBEMBESI**

The researcher had an interview with a focus group of twelve elders. To start the ball rolling, they were given a platform to say whatever they wanted to say about their background. The chief (Ndondo) chronicled their migration from the North to South Africa which tallies with historical findings of the origins of the Bantu people from Central Africa in the Congo Basin. (Ndhlukula, 1980; Guthrie, 1948). The chief related in English that, *In Transkei at Willovale there is a place called Mqwashi. In 1827, Bhungani who was the king of amaXhosa arrived at Mqwashwini from Natal. He was succeeded by Hintsa also from Natal in 1834 who gave amaMfengu land under headmen Tsomo, Duwa and Duki. They clashed with the Whites and the Whites were conquered under Cecil John Rhodes. The Mfengu people are the only community that fought the Whites and were given title deeds.*

It was highlighted by ELDER A that, *Wonke muntu oliXhosa eMbembesi ungaphansi kombuso wenduna uNdondo. Emqwashwini, okusho indawo yokuphumulela, iyatholakala futhi eZansi Afrika. Kuthiwa amaXhosa athi esiza eMbembesi evela eZansi Afrika aphumula ngaphansi kwesihlahla kuleyondawo basebeyinikeza igama lelo. Isikolo esakhiwa kuleyondawo sabizwa ngalelogama.* (Every Xhosa in Mbembesi must be under the authority of chief Ndondo. Emqwashwini, which means a resting place, is also found in South Africa. It was said when the Xhosa people came to Mbembesi they rested under a tree at that place and then named it thus. The school built there was then named after it). He further said, *NgeNtwasa kwakusiba*

*lamajankalajimu lezinto ezimangalisayo ezifana lezitimela lamakamela.* (In spring, there would appear mysterious objects like trains or camels).

The interview sought to find out the impact of the coexistence of amaXhosa with amaNdebele in terms of their languages and cultures. Generally the questions that were asked to the elders were similar to the ones asked to the teachers and the youth sourcing the same information but with a few exceptions. The interview carried out with the elders brought out the following results:

### **Question 1**

#### **Seeking to know if there are many Ndebele speakers in their community:**

The responses were just coming in randomly without any orderly arrangement. The responses show that there were quite a number of amaNdebele speakers though not very many as compared to amaXhosa who dominated the population. AmaNdebele were mostly found in Ntabazinduna.

### **Question 2**

#### **Pertaining to how frequent they normally interact with them:**

The interaction was almost on a daily basis. This automatically implied that there was a lot of impacting on each other in terms of language and culture. Spending a lot of time together obviously brought the two ethnic groups into blending.

### **Question 3**

#### **Regarding any challenges they face in communicating with Ndebele speakers:**

ELDER B highlighted that, there was contamination of languages as both languages ended up compromising for the sake of harmony. At times there was conflict of these ethnic groups due to some misunderstandings on how to do certain things that concerned both of them such as in common gatherings for food distribution and other social gatherings such as death and weddings.

### **Question 4**

#### **On similarities between IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele:**

The answer to this question has been captured in the question to the teachers. Their answers have been combined with those for teachers.

#### **Question 5**

**For any common or different words that mean the same thing:**

Again this has been captured in the teachers' interview.

#### **Question 6**

**On whether they think there have been some changes in their language due to their contact with amaNdebele:**

ELDER C was quick to say, *We do not succumb to external influence. We have maintained the language we learnt from our parents. We share some Zulu terms but have not absorbed Ndebele terms alien to us. When we speak to amaNdebele we switch over to which ever language we choose to speak together.* (Not his actual words but translated and paraphrased).

#### **Question 7**

**About which language they use on social gatherings like weddings or funerals with amaNdebele:**

It has been pointed out that both languages were used but IsiXhosa was dominant in social gatherings because the majority of the population was amaXhosa. There could be code-mixing or code-switching but mainly the language of use would be IsiXhosa.

#### **Question 8**

**Concerning similar and different cultural aspects in the two ethnic groups:**

Results show that each group upholds its own aspects in its own way but some do overlap making it difficult to tell to which ethnic group they belong, for example, ELDER A said, *when slaughtering a beast (ox/cow/bull) we attack it on the back of the neck which is also done by amaNdebele. Amagama enyama akasaziwa makuxhelwa inkomo.* (When skinning an ox, names of the parts of the ox meat are no longer known). This is due to the reason that the new generation no longer upheld cultural customs and values as there was a tendency to drift to the

Western culture in the name of civilisation in the global sense. As a result, the new generation was not concerned about traditional issues.

The elderly were blaming Christianity for destroying their culture as pointed out by ELDER A affirming that, *IsiKrestu sesaphazamisa amasiko*. (Christianity has polluted culture). He went on to say, *Izifundi lenkolo seziphambule abantu emasikweni*. (The elites and religion have diverted people from their culture). He proceeded to say, *Ukulahla imvelo yesiko sokubulele izinto ezinengi*. (Abandoning traditional culture has destroyed a lot of things). He further indicated that, *Ukwelatshwa ngemithi abantu kabasafuni*. (People no longer want to be treated through traditional herbs). He, himself was exemplified as a great herbalist. Also was Mthimkhulu or Bhungani of the royal family who was cited as an earlier herbalist. AmaNdebele also shared the same perspectives with amaXhosa on these issues of traditional religion and traditional medicine.

ELDER C highlighted that, *Izulu licelwa Emqwashwini Elityeni* (Rain-making ceremony is performed at Mqwashwini) just like amaNdebele performing the rain-making ceremony at *Elitsheni* or *ENjelele* also known as *Ematojeni* (Matopos).

AmaXhosa are proudly boasted of observing circumcision as the Jews do. Chief Ndondo highlighted (in English) that, *In South Africa some boys die during circumcision because they are no longer following the strict ways involved in the practice*.

## **Question 9**

**With regards to whether there are any conflicts that arise from cultural aspects:**

It came out that as long as they did not step on each other's toes, there was no conflict. There was a spirit of tolerance in both groups. They accommodated each other in their varied ways.



#### **Question 10**

**Pertaining to whether there are no chances of their culture being embedded in the Ndebele culture or their loss of identity:**

They vehemently objected to the idea of having their culture embedded or losing their identity. They categorically indicated that they fought hard to defend their culture and identity.

#### **Question 11**

**Concerning whether they are receiving radio programmes in their language on Khulumani FM radio station recently installed in Bulawayo and how they feel about the development:**

Only two people confirmed knowledge of the existence of the radio station and one of them, ELDER D further elaborated (Translated) that, *It is found on station 95.0 frequency modulation as from 6 to 9 pm.* This proved that he sometimes tuned on to it. When asked to elaborate, he said, *Maria Nombulelo Masoka who is bilingual speaking IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele phones in IsiNdebele inviting people to contribute in talking on air in either IsiNdebele or IsiXhosa on given topics.*

#### **Question 12**

**About what they think can be done to promote their harmonious coexistence with amaNdebele:**

The results showed that there was harmonious coexistence already because they were living peacefully as each ethnic group was not disturbed by the existence of the other. Each operated on its own and only interacted once in a while in their day to day activities and on certain communal gatherings. They tried by all means not to stand on each other's way. The only worry of amaXhosa was that their children were learning IsiNdebele at school instead of learning IsiXhosa the mother language. If that area could be addressed then they would be home and dry. Chief Ndondo speaking in English revealed that, *In 2008 the late chief Ndondo was in the process of introducing IsiXhosa in the schools but died in 2011 before accomplishing his mission. His successor died in 2014 before he achieved the mission initiated by his predecessor which led to my succession as chief in 2015. I have not done much in terms of reforms as I am still trying to acclimatise in my new post.*

### Question 13

**On what else they would like to say about their relationship with amaNdebele in their community:**

It was emphasised the issue of letting amaXhosa children learn their language otherwise they were living in harmony as they tolerated each other despite the strong desire to have their children learn their language. ELDER D (Translated) said, *We want to be part of the committee that looks into the implementation of learning of IsiXhosa in Mbembesi otherwise we have no problem in staying with amaNdebele.* The elderly people understood what it took to live in harmony with another ethnic group.

#### **4.5.1 Remarks on findings from elders**

There are five villages in Mbembesi under chief Ndondo with various headmen manning them. There were still seen primitive grass huts in some of their homes and were also found some using scotch carts as a mode of transport while they covered themselves with blankets in the cart. It is normal that two different ethnic groups have their different ways of doing things and no group would want to be dominated by the other. In such a case then, there should be a person in authority who acts as a judge usually a headman or a chief to suggest a compromise between them. On the languages spoken there was not much a problem since they are both bilingual. Even during the research, they were speaking IsiNdebele knowing pretty well that the researcher did not understand IsiXhosa very well. That was a mark of no challenge in communicating with amaNdebele in their community.

There were no changes in language per se except that there were some few language lexical items that they had adopted from IsiNdebele that they used in their spoken language. Basically IsiXhosa had remained intact except that the youths who grew up in a bilingual environment especially at school spoke a slightly different language from the original IsiXhosa. However, the elderly generation had maintained the original language that they brought from South Africa as passed on to them by their parents. There was mainly a switch over of languages. AmaNdebele had also picked and used IsiXhosa in some language constructions. The researcher's analysis is

that some of the common lexical items and linguistic features had been there from the inception of these languages as they shared a common parent Nguni language. The two ethnic groups might think they picked from each other yet they existed from the beginning.

They highlighted that they had always upheld their cultural practices especially those that were unique to them like circumcision. They also indicated that the way they clung to their language was exactly the way they clung to their culture. Some chosen men of significance occasionally visited South Africa to attend some cultural festivals. Education had also encouraged circumcision for every male but those who performed it under this advocacy did not do it the way amaXhosa did it. They also proudly boasted that they were the only community in Zimbabwe with title deeds to land that they received from Cecil John Rhodes.

It has also been observed that the Xhosa Cultural Society committee wanted to move forward in spearheading the learning of IsiXhosa in the schools leaving community traditional leaders and school heads behind. The elders involved were the retired teachers or other former professionals. The committee did not have any member from the real traditional personnel and the traditional leaders felt that their contribution had been neglected. They wanted to participate as well to the level of engagement with the Ministry of Education.

The majority of the people had no knowledge of the radio station installed, and yet it was introduced for their benefit. It could also suggest that they were not keen on listening to the radio or maybe they did not own any. They were missing out a lot on matters that affected them which could bring solutions to their challenges.

#### **4.6 FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE YOUTHS IN MBEMBESI**

The next group of people to be interviewed was the youths of the community. Not much was demanded from them since most of the information had been supplied by the teachers and the elders. They also displayed their experiences in the area of language and culture. The following were the questions that were addressed to eight youths as a group:

### **Question 1**

#### **On whether they associate with amaNdebele youths in their community:**

The findings indicated a large extent of association of the two ethnic groups in the community. They met at the shops and other gatherings and also visited some who were their friends.

### **Question 2**

#### **About what language they speak together and why:**

The responses show that they used both languages stemming from their interaction that dates back to primary school when the two ethnic groups had a common cause for education attainment. This was the time they learnt to tolerate each other's language since IsiNdebele was the subject in the school curriculum. AmaNdebele were interested in IsiXhosa after they had made friends with some of the pupils. Since then, they had always used both languages.

### **Question 3**

#### **Concerning similarities and differences found in the two languages of IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele:**

The responses have been captured in the findings of the interview with teachers.

### **Question 4**

#### **Pertaining to whether they think they have influenced each other's language that they now speak due to their contact:**

It came out that their language had been polluted by the inclusion of some of the IsiNdebele words that they had adopted into their language. In the same way they believed that IsiNdebele also had been contaminated through the inclusion of IsiXhosa terms.

### **Question 5**

#### **Regarding whether they have their own language as youths that is different from that of the adults such as words that are peculiar to their generation:**

They indicated that there was no language per se but only that theirs had more mixture of IsiNdebele more than the one that was spoken by the elders which had less influence of IsiNdebele.

#### **Question 6**

**About whether they sometimes hold any functions together as youths and the language of use:**

They did not hold any functions peculiar to the youth together. They only came together on communal functions such as weddings, funerals and food distribution or any meetings that may have been called for, by the chief or politicians.

#### **Question 7**

**Regarding whether there are no conflicts that arise concerning language use:**

There were no conflicts since they used both languages when they interacted.

#### **Question 8**

**Concerning cultural practices they find similar and different:**

The information has been captured in the teachers' interview.

#### **Question 9**

**About what they think can be done to promote their harmonious coexistence with amaNdebele:**

They felt that they were already staying in harmony because they tolerated each other and were living peacefully. Very little quarreling was ever experienced on ethnic grounds.

#### **Question 10**

**On what else they would want to say about their relationship with amaNdebele youths in their community:**

There was a feeling of being colonised by amaNdebele stemming from the imposition of IsiNdebele as a language in the curriculum but it did not generate into hostility.

#### **4.6.1 Remarks on findings from youths**

Not much was obtained from the youths. The youth of the Mbembesi community lived together in harmony and understood each other. Growing up together and learning together at school

strengthened their relationship. Some had made friends from the other ethnic group. They spoke each other's language and have borrowed some lexical items from each other. However, they felt that their language had slightly changed from that of the elders. They also felt a bit dominated by amaNdebele when it came to language in the school curriculum. Otherwise they coexisted well.

#### **4.7 FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH A MEMBER OF THE XHOSA CULTURAL SOCIETY**

The researcher conducted an unstructured interview with a committee member of the Xhosa Cultural Society when she decided to find out about the mandate and activities of this committee. He was asked to give a general overview of the activities related to the promotion of the rights of amaXhosa in Mbembesi through the Zimbabwean 2013 Constitution. He gave the following narration in English: *There are eleven (11) mixed group members in the committee, comprising teachers, pastors and some community members that are not professionals. The Constitution had passed and granted the teaching of IsiXhosa in the schools where two pilot schools Cameron and Mqwashwini were chosen to initiate the program. This was after the Permanent secretary had emphasised to the Matabeleland North Provincial office that IsiXhosa ought to be taught in the schools. In the past, IsiXhosa was taught in Mbembesi in the early 1960s, with literature in the language as well. As early as 1958, IsiXhosa was learnt from Sub A up to Standard 6 being taught by amaXhosa teachers in the likes of Majozi, Nombembe and Mrs Nxusani. It was stopped when Doke proposed that IsiNdebele should be taught in all schools in Matabeleland. Since then IsiNdebele was taught until the new constitution was passed that raised the status of IsiXhosa to be officially recognised. We are trying to revive the teaching of IsiXhosa in Mbembesi once again.*

*Currently there is some literature in the form of books that came from South Africa at the efforts of king Zwelonke as a donation that are at Mhlahlandlela Education Offices that are awaiting permission from South African printers to use those books that came in 2017. There is a cry for South African Ministry of Education to make a follow up with the printers to clear the obstacle to the use of those books. We desire to see great support from the Zimbabwean government and the Ministry of Education in ensuring that the teaching of IsiXhosa takes off in full swing.*

*There is a general slackening of the observance of traditional customs and norms, so we are trying to enforce the strict observance of traditional customs, norms and values as well as ensure correct procedures for cultural ceremonies. Some of the leaders attend cultural ceremonies in South Africa while we also host South African representatives when we conduct ours. Our aim is to ensure that our culture does not die including our language.*

#### **4.7.1 Remarks on findings from the Xhosa Cultural Society committee member**

One of the functions of this committee was to hold meetings periodically to review the progress made towards the implementation of the learning of IsiXhosa in the schools and to map the way forward. They have also noted that some cultural practices are no longer observed or are being neglected, so the committee looks into that with the coordinator of South African Xhosa community to try and enforce their observance. It might turn out to be difficult to achieve this objective much since culture is dynamic and people are progressing instead of retrogressing. Traditional customs are being overtaken by time and events of development. Below is a bit of more detail on some cultural practices that the Mbembesi Xhosa community engages in as presented by the Xhosa Cultural Society committee member and a Xhosa activist.

#### **4.8 CULTURAL LIFE OF AMAXHOSA**

In this research it was established that the amaXhosa way of life is peculiar and idiosyncratic in that although other cultural facets are similar to those of other Nguni groups they have their unique practices beyond those practiced by other Groups.

The most outstanding cultural event is *ukusokwa* (circumcision) that is strictly observed during the period from April to September. This is similar to the Jewish practice. The boys of between 18 and 20 years go through an initiation ceremony of circumcision. The boys are referred to as *amakhwenkwe* before they are circumcised and are not respected in society and after circumcision they are called *obhuti* meaning brothers, gaining respect and called men ready to marry. No girl would want to marry an uncircumcised man. *Umguyo* is a ceremony of dancing the whole night a day before their circumcision. A Xhosa activist claimed that if they stay with an Ndebele boy or man they circumcise him. He went on to say no death has ever been

recorded in Mbembesi because they deal with a small figure or even one at a time unlike in South Africa where they do it at an initiation school with many boys where some die.

Bafana (2011) highlights that the boys are secluded in a grass hut called *bhuma* in the forest during the circumcision ceremony during which five songs are recorded portraying an image of war (*jingoma zoqhuba inkwenkwe*) meaning songs to graduate an initiate. Of the five songs is one called *Vela ndoda enesibindi* (Appear man of courage). Butler (2015) notes that some of the songs show link to Zululand as sung by those who accompany the initiates, for example, *Kukungenje kwaZulu, thina siyoyik'abeLungu*. (It was never like this in Zululand, we are afraid of the White people). The Zimbabwean Xhosa community observes this cultural activity with respect and dignity. In 2009 there was a national call for circumcision to all willing males of ripe age after *umguyo* had been appreciated. Every amaXhosa family in Mbembesi greatly desires to locate their relatives in South Africa particularly those that they share surnames with. Some cross to South Africa even without legal travel documents when they just say, *Siyagoduka* meaning we are going back home.

Bukwana (1998) argues that there are initiation schools for adolescent boys out in the veld for circumcision, initiated into responsibilities of manhood. This custom, he posits is strictly observed and practised by all Xhosa males of age. He further asserts that it is held in high esteem and reverence leading to tribal cohesion through tribal traditions passed from generation to generation. He quotes Ashton (1946) who noted that initiation was also meant to foster wisdom and discipline to the initiates for the preservation of tribal cultural values such as integrity. For the girls, at puberty they stay in the bush for teachings from old women on how to become women of valour, for a period of one month. The ceremony is called *intonjana*.

Mabena (1999) made a study on this important event of circumcision to the Southern Ndebele boys and came up with similar experiences as follows:

Towles (1993); in Mabena (1999), in his study of the Nkumbi initiation says the Nkumbi initiates remain in the circumcision lodge for up to three months. During this period they sing songs and are taught certain moral codes articulated as “manly” behaviour, and are given the esoteric knowledge of the tribe. Thus the initiation school has a socialising influence on the adolescent



in that it provides the physical environment in which the adolescent meets his peers who could become life-long friends. In this way the adolescent is afforded the opportunity of natural integration into the world.

Mabena (1999) further said, A Ndebele who is not initiated is described merely as a boy, an *umcasa* (rabbit) or an *ishuburu* (derogatory names for the uninitiated). So uncompromising are the Ndebele on this, that an uncircumcised male over the circumcision age may be overpowered and circumcised against his will. Mabena (1999) quotes Funani (1950: iv) saying that, in the Northern Province respectable citizens - school principals, teachers and policemen - have been forcibly circumcised. It was also indicated similar perceptions by the Mbembesi Xhosa community. Mabena (1999) concluded that, These South African ethnic groups which practise circumcision all view the ritual with strong personal - as well as cultural - pride. The circumcision operation is the most unforgettable physical and mental scar, which lasts forever, and defines one of the major aims of initiation.

Wilson (1952:211) in Mabena (1999) observes that, after the Xhosa and Mfengu have undergone initiation for only eight days, the ritual of *ukojiswa* is observed. Here the ritual portion of a slaughtered white goat is roasted on the fire, on which are placed the green leaves of the sneeze wood tree, which produces a thick smoke. The meat is rubbed in the ash so that it is bitter and burned, cut into pieces and skewered on a thorny branch, and then given to the boys. Each initiate must reach for the meat from the thorny branch with his mouth, and as he does so the branch is twisted so that it scratches his face. Such hardship is meant to train the young man to be brave.

The Xhosa activist said that there is also another important cultural event celebrated during a wedding. There is a marriage cake ceremony whereby the bride has the first dress and during the second dress there is a cake dance. The two sides of the bride and bridegroom sing different songs dancing for the cake. *Umkyikyimbo* is the girls singing and dancing competition at wedding. The Xhosa Cultural Society committee member also cited the festival.

The Sunday News (26 May-1 June 2019) records an article by Nyathi on *Connecting with God: The Mfengu people convene for religious ceremony*, in which there is some historical background of how amaXhosa came to Mbembesi from South Africa. The ceremony was said to be going to take place at *Elityeni* (where there is a big boulder) in Mbembesi on Saturday 1 June 2019 as a reconciliatory religious ceremony because they felt they had drifted from God in the traditional sense and seek to reconnect with God the Creator. ELDER A made this observation during the interview that people had neglected their traditional beliefs and customs due to the observance of Christian values. All Mfengu-Xhosa communities of Marhawana, Madluntsha, Ngxingweni, Mantanjeni, Maqaqeni, Mbethe and Ndakana in Mbembesi as well as those from other places all over Zimbabwe were expected to converge and it was also expected to be attended by some delegates from South Africa.

Nyathi (2019) mentions that in the past they used to hold this event annually to renew their vows and commitment to the *Fingo Oath* sworn in Cape Colony near Butterworth under milk hood tree *umqwashi*. It is believed that the reason why they sought this reconciliation was that most people had believed in Christianity which the elders thought was responsible for disturbing the peaceful communal living where nature had also acted unethically marked by a series of disasters and misfortunes as once alluded to by one of the elders who is a traditional healer, during the interview. The meeting on Saturday was expected to improve quality of social life and environmental conditions of amaXhosa, as alluded to by Nyathi (2019).

The Xhosa activist gave a brief background on this *Fingo Oath* affirming that it took place on 14 May 1835 in Peddie district in South Africa when amaMfengu gathered under a milk hood tree (*umqwashi*) and swore with an oath to be loyal to the Queen of England, to accept Christianity and to educate their children. He further noted that the event was celebrated annually on the same date in South Africa under the milk hood tree where the oath was sworn, referring to it as the Fingo Emancipation Day. The Xhosa activist further said the occasion used to be celebrated as Jubilee, *Inkonzo yentlokomo*. (Celebration for conquest), which was last celebrated in 1967. The 1 June event was meant to revive the occasion celebration.

The activist confirmed that in Mbembesi the event was held on 1 June this 2019 year. In this event there is a cultural exchange with South Africans when the Zimbabwean Xhosa delegation goes to South Africa to attend their occasion and the South African delegation also attends the Zimbabwean occasion. The June 1 event was attended by the South African delegation in Mbembesi at *Elityeni* at Mqwashwini where the first Xhosa school was built.

The activist also indicated that there are other cultural events that are performed at *Elityeni* such as praying for rain by Christians of all denominations in October. The youths gather at KwaNomeva River every year praying for rain. During the harvest season, in the following year, they gather again for thanksgiving to the Lord bringing with them beasts and grain for distribution to the less privileged. This occasion is similar to *iNxwala* that used to be celebrated by amaNdebele in the past during the traditional kings' era like Mzilikazi and his successors. It was also indicated that on Sundays no one was allowed to go beer drinking during the time of church services but could do so when it was over. This demonstrates their allegiance to their Christianity that they take it to be sacred.

#### **4.9 INTERVIEWEES' RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Mbembesi community has become very aggressive as to why IsiXhosa is not taught in their schools. They approached the schools seeking for an explanation and registering their grievances, and it is suspected that the issue has been taken to the District Schools Inspector and the Provincial Education Director. The teachers are willing to teach provided they are supported with teaching materials. The following recommendations came up from the community, the committee and the teachers:

- Let there be one subject specialist teacher with no fixed class who teaches IsiXhosa from Grade 1 to 7.
- The chief should approach the Provincial Office and recommend that amaXhosa teachers all over the country should be brought back to the Mbembesi community to advance the teaching of their language.
- Promote the teaching of IsiXhosa through the inclusion of any teacher in the area

because they speak the language with the pupils.

- The ministry should provide learning materials in the subject.
- Educated amaXhosa should spearhead the writing of learning materials, starting with the corpus, dictionary, textbooks and other materials.
- All retired amaXhosa teachers should be re-engaged to assist in the teaching of the subject.
- The qualified teachers who are unemployed should be employed to teach IsiXhosa.
- IsiXhosa must be taught from primary up to university just like in the other indigenous languages in the country.
- Training of amaXhosa teachers at tertiary institutions should come as a priority to ensure that the pupils learn their language up to university as their right.
- AmaXhosa lecturers in South African universities and Teachers' colleges could assist in training trainers for the subject.
- The chief should take the lead in correcting imbalances in the community in liaison with the Ministry of Education which makes decisions.

#### **4.10 GENERAL REMARKS**

The government is not actively giving amaXhosa an opportunity to develop them. Teaching and learning materials are not made available as what was done with the other formerly marginalised languages. The community wishes to have IsiXhosa to be learnt in the schools so it is liaising with king Zwelonke who provided teaching and learning materials to promote the teaching of IsiXhosa in Mbembesi and all other places where amaXhosa are found.

Parents are very disappointed that their children are learning IsiNdebele instead of learning their IsiXhosa language. They are calling on amaXhosa teachers to teach their children IsiXhosa. If the language does not develop, it faces extinction over many decades especially if the old generation dies. Linguistic structural features of IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele are similar to a greater extent due to the extent of the two ethnic groups' contact. The dominant role of IsiNdebele in

society is aggravated by the language policies that have been crafted to favour IsiNdebele over IsiXhosa.

## **4.11 GENERAL DISCUSSION**

### **4.11.1 Language as a right**

AmaXhosa have been denied the right to use their language in education and in public domains in Zimbabwe. You never see any public notice or advert in the language. Some people do not even know that it exists. The language has not been recognised as we hear that even when the other formally marginalised languages were regarded as minority languages by Hachipola (1998), IsiXhosa was not mentioned at all. Being denied this right leads to a low self-esteem, looking down upon the language and loss of identity as one would want to associate with a high variety. The assertion is strongly moved by Mamabolo (2005) who claimed that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language of their choice in public institutions where that education is reasonably practicable.....taking into account the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices. This can also be said in the current study where amaXhosa have also the right to receive education in their schools in their own IsiXhosa language instead of IsiNdebele language that was imposed on them by Doke (1931) during the colonial era. Furthermore, Mamobolo (2005) notes that everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice.... (RSA 1996a 2, 29 (2) & RSA 1996a 2, 30). From this constitution, Mamobolo (2005) concluded that it makes it clear that language is one of the fundamental rights of a human being.

Makanda, (2009) concurs with Mamobolo (2005) in his assertion of everyone having a right to their language when he claimed that: The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights provides language communities of the world with certain rights. Article 3 (2) states that; this declaration considers that the collective rights of language groups, may include the following, in addition to the rights attributed to the members of language groups in the foregoing paragraph and in accordance with the conditions laid down in article 22 which are:

1. right for their own language and culture to be taught

2. the right of access to cultural services
3. right to an equitable presence of their language and culture in the communicational media
4. right to receive attention in their own language from government bodies and in Socio-economic relations

Of all the above rights, only number 2 is being observed for amaXhosa in Mbembesi. There is no teaching of IsiXhosa in the schools because the idea was implemented in 2013 and abandoned in 2016. There is no media in IsiXhosa except for a few programs in Khulumani FM radio station that touch on IsiXhosa here and there. There is no attention given from the government bodies except the 2013 Constitution on the officially recognised languages including IsiXhosa but no socio-economic relations have been observed.

Makanda (2009) argues that Article 17 (d) of UNESCO Basic Human Rights and Democracy (2000:175) states that children must have access to information through the media. States promised to encourage the media to provide children's materials in indigenous and minority languages. This has not been realised with respect to amaXhosa children in Mbembesi. There is no equal treatment of indigenous languages. Makanda (2009) further quotes Mutasa (1999:97) who also observed that 'at present it was appropriate to speak more abstractly of language equity as ideology, an idea in the mind, rather than a reality to which actual usage or implementation might conform.' Mutasa (1999)'s observation suggests that there is a mere talk of according all languages equal status and opportunities but the situation on the ground is different. This is true of IsiXhosa of Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe is a multilingual country with many unrecognised languages. It became difficult to have a language policy as a nation. During the colonial era, only three languages were made official languages namely, ChiShona, English and IsiNdebele while the rest were thrown in the background. They were only to be used in the areas where they were spoken. It is only recent that some of them that have been formally marginalised have been raised in their status to the extent of being learnt up to university.

In light of the above observation, Mamabolo (2005) quoted Mutasa (1999) claiming that South Africa, an emerging nation, has chosen a multilingual approach as its language policy. Their eleven official languages have been given recognition and a fair share of development ever since the country attained its independence in 1994. IsiXhosa is one of the leading languages there but here in Zimbabwe it is one of the least recognised. In a similar comparison, Mamabolo (2005) claims that historical survey of IsiNdebele Literary-Art Department of African Languages at the University of Pretoria in February 2002, confirms that IsiNdebele (isiKhethu) with its speakers mainly found in North West part of Mpumalanga Province near Pretoria, became formally written in 1985 when it was introduced in the schools for the first time. It is alleged that it is still lagging behind other African languages in terms of development when compared with others. Mamabolo (2005) further notes that there is need for careful language planning in terms of availing material resources, qualified field workers and developers and even financial resources. If IsiXhosa of Zimbabwe could be involved in all the above- mentioned support, then it would be far developed than its current status.

#### **4.11.2 Language contact and divergence**

IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele of Mbembesi are the languages that have been in contact since centuries ago. As such, they have impacted on each other resulting in some changes in their languages as has been observed in the cited examples of pupils' work. According to *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, (Crystal 2006:102) Language contact is a term used in sociolinguistics to refer to a situation of geographical continuity or close social proximity (and thus of mutual influence) between languages or dialects. The result of contact situations can be seen linguistically, in the growth of loan words, patterns of phonological and grammatical change, mixed forms of language (such as creoles and pidgins) and general increase in bilingualism of various kinds. In a restricted sense, languages are said to be 'in contact; if they are used alternatively by the same person, that is, bilinguals. Indeed Crystal (2006) is presenting the Mbembesi scenario.

As alluded to earlier, IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele are both Nguni languages, and as such, they share a lot of lexical items together with IsiZulu and IsiSwati. Tani, et al., (2005) who looked at lexical

divergence in comparing Ndebele, Zulu, Xhosa and Swati define lexical divergence as a language change or language difference at word level. Still advancing the issue of lexical divergence, they bring in the issues of broadening causes of lexical divergence whereby technological advancement creates terminology to be used by all nationalities resulting in lexical divergence. The other narrowing causes have to do with geographical location whereby in this case amaXhosa came from Cape Colony in South Africa to Mbembesi in Zimbabwe where they adopted and adapted to the lifestyle and language of original people.

Tani, et al. (2005), proceed to say that the Nguni people have different words to mean the same thing. This calls for IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele in Mbembesi under study to be claimed that they fall under the same motion. They further say, contact between people speaking different languages results in borrowing from each other and at times forming a new language. Tani, et al. (2005) further profess that code switching by bilingual speakers also causes lexical divergence, creation of new styles, registers, new grammatical features, introduction of sounds and stylistic devices. Semantic change in the two languages, IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele, is through socio-cultural forces stemming from their environmental experiences.

Amuda (1989:11) explains bilinguals' code-switching as follows:

*One of the most frequent explanations of why bilinguals code-switch is that they do it to compensate for lack of language proficiency. The argument is that bilinguals code-switch because they do not know either language completely.*

AmaXhosa and amaNdebele code switch because they are in contact and always experiencing each other's language in use. It may not be true in this particular case that they code switch because they do not know either language completely but it is because the situation demands so.

Siwisa (2013) also observes contrary to the claim by Amuda (1989) when he asserts that: Code-switching is when two languages occur in close geographical and/or social proximity, such as IsiXhosa and IsiZulu do in South Africa, code switching may form part of the everyday process



of communication. In a bilingual environment, the use of one language may be restricted to a particular domain, e.g. at home or in church, while the other language will be used only for business purposes. Outside the classroom, pupils use their linguistic resources in a flexible way to achieve their communicative purposes. In classrooms teachers are expected to develop students' abilities in particular languages in demonstrable ways. The assertion describes the similar reason for code switching by amaXhosa and amaNdebele of Mbembesi.

#### **4.11.3 Preservation of IsiXhosa**

Language preservation is a priority to every ethnic group whether majority or minority group. The identity of a group is seen in their language because it speaks of who they are and where they come from. The only way to preserve a language is through its written form because it remains for all generations to come to fall on. Everyone will be able to know the original language without its pollution from other languages in contact with it. Ngadini (2016) quotes Chimhundu (1999) who claimed that there is a lot of talk on the need to preserve, promote and develop African languages but very little is done in practice. Ngadini (2016) also quotes Mutasa (1995) who postulates that orthography is a challenge in promotion and development of minority languages in Zimbabwe. This could be the reason why it is difficult for the country to implement the policy of having all indigenous languages taught in the schools especially for IsiXhosa that has not taken off in earnest. Ngadini (2016) cites Mumpande (2006) who has gone as far as writing material for Tonga proverbs. The fact is that people should be allowed to use their language in every sphere of their lives. It is well known that language is a vehicle to transmit culture, and as such, knowledge, attitudes and values are acquired in one's language. This should also be said of amaXhosa of Mbembesi who seem to be greatly disadvantaged.

The first step of commitment to preserve IsiXhosa was the formation of the 2013 Constitution which saw the language being officially recognised although practically it is lagging behind in both public life and education as indicated in the findings of this research. In a bid to preserve IsiXhosa language in Zimbabwe, Velaphi (2011) reports that the newly crowned South African Xhosa King, Mpendulo Zwelonke Sigcawu is set to deliver Xhosa language books to Zimbabwe's Xhosa communities, well known as the amaFengu and based in Mbembeswana area near

Bulawayo, Matabeleland. The king himself pledged to support his people when he said; *There are so many Xhosa people all over the world who face problems, either spiritually or culturally. My responsibility is to visit them, hear their problems and see where I can offer help. For example, in Zimbabwe, my people are complaining that they have to learn Shona in schools as there are no Xhosa literature books. I have already spoken to the Gauteng government for help in delivering Xhosa books to Zimbabwe so that the Xhosa can speak in their mother tongue.*

It is hoped that these are the same books that the Xhosa Cultural Society committee member talked about in the interview with the researcher saying the books were delivered to Mhlahlandlela Education offices but were awaiting clearance from the publishers before they could be distributed to the schools. Once the issue is resolved, the Mbembesi community would be more than happy to have their children learn their language.

Velaphi (2011), further affirms that, *The Xhosa community in Zimbabwe is well established and arrived with Mzilikazi after fleeing from Shaka and established themselves and kept their language dialect intact, slightly distinct from original Zulu.* AmaXhosa have the right to use their own language without necessarily relying on IsiZulu or isiNdebele, in this case, which is not their language but which they once used under the rule of Mzilikazi who imposed his language on his followers when they fled from Tshaka.

Hachipola, (1998) makes instructive comment on the future of IsiXhosa in Zimbabwe as a language that should have disappeared in the country yet still survives. Hachipola (1998:76) notes that:

*Xhosa has remained intact although it is spoken by few people because the community is closely knit and the people continue to teach their children to speak their language. Strong ethnic identity has helped to preserve the language and culture of this community which could have disappeared a long time ago.*

The language will not die as long as the people who speak it are available. Kunju (2017)'s thesis is another example of a way of preserving the language by making it recognised at university

level and at PhD level. Those who read his work come to appreciate that the language has the right to be treated like any other language. The fact that the language is marginalised makes its speakers cohesive.

The establishment of Khulumani FM radio station is an attempt to preserve the marginalised African Languages of Matabeleland including IsiXhosa. It is entitled *Khulumani-Izwi Lethu, Igugu lethu* broadcasting seven languages namely, Ndebele, Xhosa, Sotho, Venda, Kalanga, Tonga and English which are Matabeleland's local languages, except for English. It was also indicated that it would cover a forty (40) kilometre radius outside Bulawayo. This caters for amaXhosa in Mbembesi area which is about forty (40) kilometres north of Bulawayo. That way the language would continue to be heard on air and the owners of the language would continue to value it and not look down upon it.

Dube (2014) reported in Washington D C that the Zimbabwean Xhosa community was seeking twenty (20) million dollars for the construction of a secondary school to empower locals with education and preserve their vanishing language. It is said to be vanishing because it is not learnt at high school and also not given attention at primary school or in public life. Dube (2014) reports that amaXhosa prince Macleod Tshawe told (Voice of America) VOA Studio 7 that the government is fully backing the project since the new Constitution recognises IsiXhosa as among Zimbabwe's (sixteen) 16 officially recognised languages. Prince Tshawe went further to say that the school would provide lessons from Form 1-6 which was a project that had also received support from king Zwelonke. In his speech he actually said, *We are happy that we have received a lot of support from the Zimbabwean government and king Zwelonke*. However, this project did not materialise for unknown reasons. If it had materialised, then this would be the first step to the preservation of the language to its highest level.

#### **4.11.4 IsiXhosa as a quintessence of their humanity**

It has been observed that one's language is important in the sense that even an uneducated (unschooled) individual can live a successful life because one would be using one's indigenous language to create one's worldview appropriately. It is therefore, apparent that amaXhosa be

allowed to use their language freely and participate fully in development issues for themselves and the nation. Notwithstanding, if they look down upon their language and themselves due to the inferiority complex imposed on them by the political situation, then no development will take place to them. Ngadini (2016) also cites Ndlovu (2013) who distinguishes between major and minor languages with marked differences in power, status, rights, privileges and prestige, leading to inequality in the education system. IsiXhosa happens to be on the disadvantaged position. IsiNdebele was given a higher position over IsiXhosa by Doke in 1931 for the sake of hegemony in Matabeleland. Nyota (2012) is also cited in saying Doke failed to cater for or recognise other languages spoken in Zimbabwe, calling this failure a “Doke tragedy” which led to the marginalisation of some languages including IsiXhosa.

The 2006 Amended Education policy on languages saw the promotion of African languages when it was proposed that mother tongue was to be the medium of instruction at primary up to Grade Seven (7). However the teachers failed to embrace the idea maybe because of lack of terminology in the African languages for some subjects or maybe they looked down upon the indigenous languages preferring English. The move was done to promote the African culture since language and culture are inseparable (Mutasa, 2006; in Rasila, 2014). Non-use of some languages may lead to their extinction as observed by Nyota (2012) that half the existing languages face extinction by 2050. If the languages are only used at home and not in public places, the owners of the language may look down upon their languages and fail to appreciate their value thereby promoting their extinction. Obeiro (2010) citing Crystal (2000) indicates that one of the causes of language death is negative attitude towards one’s own language regarding it as worthless. It was indicated during the research that some amaXhosa parents had a negative attitude towards having their children learn IsiXhosa claiming that they did not see any future in the language. In such a case, there is no promotion of the development of the language by its owners.

The other reason for less use of some indigenous languages is that there is a lot of interaction with the other languages of high variety which makes the two separate languages to influence each other in their contact with the low variety assuming the submission role to the dominant

ones (Cullum & Harton, 2007; in Harton & Bullock, 2007). This contact results in phonological and grammatical changes of words in bilingualism (Crystal, 2006). Tofan (2005) claims that such contact leads to borrowing from each other's language. This is emphasised by Ngara (1982) when he claims that contact between two or more languages makes them combine elements to make them their own. This is realised of IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele of Mbembesi as has been pointed out above. Code-switching also surfaces as Anderson (2017) claims.

It is crucial that amaXhosa should use their mother-tongue in every sphere of their lives. They name the world through their mother-tongue. They have a world view through the use of their mother-tongue. Maliwa (2005) quotes Wissing (1998) who researched on the role of the mother-tongue in Black South African English, and explained interference as: *The linguistic habits of the first language in some way hinder the learner from acquiring the correct habits of the second language and lead to his transferring his first language habits directly to the second language*. In the same way, it could be argued that amaXhosa of Mbembesi constantly have their IsiXhosa interfering with IsiNdebele as they learn IsiNdebele at school as evidenced in their pieces of short compositions about their school, that leads to their poor performance in IsiNdebele Grade Seven (7) examinations as has been alluded to during the research.

When amaXhosa learn IsiNdebele at school, they transfer rules and habits from IsiXhosa. As a result, they are found to be writing IsiNdebele with errors because their language would be affected by IsiXhosa. On the other hand, Maliwa (2005) quotes Makalela (1998), who argues that transfer theory was modified in the following respects as a result of further research: *Learners may not transfer, but may avoid using those rules that are absent in their L1. Some errors do not arise from language transfer, but from other sources such as transfer of training (how students are taught)*. Lastly, Maliwa (2005), notes that, some errors are due to lack of similarities between L1 and L2. Following his argument, it could be concluded that amaXhosa children at school find it difficult to do well in IsiNdebele due to bad delivery of lessons by their teachers or that the two languages have sharp differences.

People think in their mother-tongue, and if they have to speak or write a second language, the traces of the first language are seen in their work. In the same way, amaXhosa think in their

language as they try to express themselves in IsiNdebele causing a blending of the two languages. Mamabolo (2005) asserts that, mother-tongue instruction is the base of most crucial cognitive development of any learner for proper mastery of basic learning skills and concepts, before a second language could be introduced as a subject, and not as a second medium of teaching and learning.

In Mamabolo (2005)'s study of Southern Transvaal Ndebele, he observed that it is slightly different from other Nguni languages spoken in South Africa in that it incorporates several atypical Nguni features in its lexical sound and grammatical system. This language is said to have posed challenges to the Ndebele first language speakers and being teachers who would have been educated and trained in different languages. This is the same scenario with amaXhosa home language speakers who were handpicked to teach IsiXhosa in Mbembesi while they had been educated in IsiNdebele. It is apparent that IsiXhosa that they tried to teach was affected by IsiNdebele that they had learnt at school and college. There would be constant interference between the two languages. As a result, the two languages change from their original state through contact.

#### **4.12 CONCLUSION**

The chapter presented the findings from the research that was carried out in Mbembesi to establish the extent and impact of the symbiotic relationship between the two ethnic groups on their language and culture. The main source of information was the four primary schools. It was established that the 2013 Constitution is not being fully implemented. Although some two primary schools were chosen as pilot project, they only taught IsiXhosa from 2013 up to 2015 and reverted to IsiNdebele from 2016, citing lack of teaching and learning materials in the subject area. Some books that have been donated from South Africa have not yet reached the beneficiaries owing to some formalities that have to be followed. All along the pupils were learning IsiNdebele owing to the 1931 Doke Recommendation that saw IsiNdebele in the curriculum, being taught as a subject in Matabeleland schools, although the region had various indigenous languages as per districts, which were regarded as minority languages.

The speakers of those various indigenous languages were denied their right to their languages as IsiNdebele was imposed on them. As a result, amaXhosa children are not performing very well in IsiNdebele subject because it is not their language. Some pupils have a negative attitude towards the learning of IsiNdebele which is probably a contributing factor to their low performance. The teachers also have to be bilingual in order to accommodate both groups. The language has been sidelined when all other minority languages were promoted to be languages in the curriculum after the training of teachers in the institutions of Higher Education. There should be some training of amaXhosa teachers and the writing of the teaching and learning materials in the language spoken in Mbembesi and not the Standard Xhosa of South Africa which has proved to be slightly different. IsiXhosa should be elevated just like what has been done to the other minority languages that have received attention from UNICEF and the government. Efforts should be made to preserve the language. The introduction of Khulumani FM radio station that presents some Xhosa programs is one such commendable effort to preserve the language. Policies put in place should be implemented. The 2013 Constitution is also a giant step to preserve the language, but it also needs other supporting measures such as resource materials.

There is a committee that sees to the running of amaXhosa affairs that have to do mainly with education of the children in their language and observance of traditional customs and cultural activities. However, the committee fails to work in harmony with the schools because the heads of the schools are not part of the committee. Notwithstanding, the pupils speak each other's language and share some cultural activities. They do very well in cultural dances. The most significant cultural activities are: the Fingo Oath, circumcision, which sometimes is forcibly carried out on adults that have passed the stage, marriage cake and praying for rain. Most cultural activities are carried out at *Elityeni* at Mqwashwini. Delegates from South Africa attend their festivals while they also have some of them going to South Africa to attend theirs. The elders are very concerned about the loss of culture by the youth. They blame it on the coming of Christianity which condemned traditional beliefs and culture in general, making people to abandon them. They also blame the Xhosa Cultural Society for not including some community leaders in their committee.

Although the two languages are Nguni, there are differences in the two languages' orthography. However, being Nguni, both IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele are mutually intelligible with IsiZulu. There is a lot in common that relates to mutual intelligibility and pronunciations. However, the distinction lies in vowel elision or double vowel which occurs in some IsiXhosa constructions, which is not a characteristic feature of IsiNdebele. In this case some spellings differ but amaXhosa children mistakenly mix up the different spellings of isiXhosa and IsiNdebele, for example, they may write *-tsh* which is IsiNdebele instead of *-ty* for the same phoneme in IsiXhosa. With regard to terminology, pupils use IsiNdebele idiophones related to colour instead of IsiXhosa ones. They also adopted IsiNdebele proverbs but they are expressed with a slight alteration at times. This depicts that the impact of language contact in Mbembesi is overwhelming.

Language change is also realised in IsiXhosa which is now slightly different from the original South African IsiXhosa. Quite a number of words have changed to be different words used in Mbembesi. IsiFengu which is a Xhosa dialect or variety is not standard Xhosa that is why it has slightly digressed from the standard Xhosa which is IsiGcaleka. IsiHlubi variety is very closely related to IsiNdebele. There is a lot of code-switching and code-mixing when the children speak. It has been established that the two ethnic groups have impacted on each other in terms of language and culture to a great extent. The following chapter pertains to the conclusion of the research and recommendations for improvement of the situation obtaining.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the summarised findings of the whole research against the set objectives of the study and for further study. It also brings to light the data presented, discussion and analysis. The aim of the study was to investigate the extent and impact of the symbiotic relationship between amaNdebele and amaXhosa of Mbembesi in Zimbabwe on IsiXhosa language and amaXhosa culture. The findings of the study were attained through interviews with the heads of schools, teachers, community elders, community youths, a member of the Xhosa Cultural Society, a Xhosa activist, a middle aged member of the community as well as document analysis of the Indigenous Languages syllabus, scheme books and pupils' compositions in the two languages on a given topic by the same pupils. Responses to interviews were transcribed and analysed in line with the interview questions. Recommendations based on findings on chapter 4 are also presented in this chapter.

#### **5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The study established that AmaXhosa are an off shoot of Mfengu sub-group that migrated from Cape Colony in South Africa and came to Zimbabwe with Cecil John Rhodes while amaNdebele also came to Zimbabwe with Mzilikazi from Zululand in South Africa with a few amaXhosa. With regards to this, the research found out that the click sounds of -c, -x and-q in both IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele were obtained after contact with the Khoikhoi and San families (Khoisan). They both had contact with amaZulu in addition to Khoisan. In order to come up with a comprehensive picture of the summary, it is apparent to revisit the research questions that were laid down in chapter 1. The main question sought for the impact of the symbiotic relationship between amaNdebele and amaXhosa of Mbembesi in Zimbabwe on IsiXhosa language and amaXhosa culture. The main findings were realised on the impact of the symbiotic relationship between the two ethnic groups on their language. The comparison of the two languages mainly came from the teachers, school pupils in their written work and a local lady.

The study discovered that the Mbembesi area is a small community dominated by amaXhosa among amaNdebele. There are four primary schools and one secondary school in the area. It was established that the 2013 Constitution that pronounced sixteen (16) languages of Zimbabwe including IsiXhosa as officially recognised was implemented at its inception in 2013 when two primary schools out of four were made pilot schools for the implementation of the program. Two specialist teachers were provided by the Ministry of Education from other neighbouring schools to teach IsiXhosa to amaXhosa pupils. The study established that the program lacked continuity citing lack of support in terms of resources. It was then abandoned in 2016 when the schools reverted to the teaching of IsiNdebele citing challenges of continuity although amaXhosa outnumber amaNdebele in population. As a result, amaXhosa pupils do not fare well in Grade Seven (7) examinations since they would be writing a second language to them, competing with amaNdebele nationally who are the owners of the language that they learn as a first language.

During interviews with teachers, it was established that the pupils themselves relate well without conflict even though they speak different languages, at times they speak each other's language. They play well together. Teachers use both languages in class but with IsiNdebele dominating since it is the subject in the school curriculum in which the pupils write an examination in Grade Seven (7). However, non-Xhosa and non-Ndebele speaking teachers find it difficult to appropriately teach the pupils and are often laughed at by the pupils when they try to speak, making errors especially with IsiXhosa that they find so difficult.

The pupils themselves have a negative attitude towards the learning of IsiNdebele language which is not theirs. On the contrary, while most parents also want their children to learn their language, there are some parents with a negative attitude towards the move citing its lack of future gains. AmaXhosa teachers are willing to teach the language but their efforts are hampered by lack of teaching and learning materials. The only available documents in IsiXhosa language are the National Anthem and The Lord's Prayer that have been translated into IsiXhosa.

AmaXhosa children have been disadvantaged by the fact that the first Xhosa school to be established is Ingwenya Mission in Ntabazinduna under the Ndebele chief Ndiweni who promoted the learning of his language. Secondly, the 1931 Doke recommendation proposed IsiNdebele to be the indigenous language in Matabeleland schools' curriculum, marginalising IsiXhosa and other indigenous languages in the region (Chimhundu, 2005).

Since amaNdebele and amaXhosa came in contact in Mbembesi, they have coexisted peacefully. The parents' worry is that their children are learning IsiNdebele instead of their IsiXhosa language. They are eager to see them learning their language in the schools. They are also concerned that the committee that looks into the implementation of the program of the learning of IsiXhosa sidelines the community elders who believe that they also have a lot to contribute. They even wish to be engaged in the negotiations with the Ministry.

The pupils do not perform well in IsiNdebele subject at Grade Seven (7). Notwithstanding, Mqwashwini primary school does very well in cultural dance competitions that are organised by the Ministry of Education. They participate in both amaNdebele and amaXhosa dances and fare very well at District and Provincial levels. The most popular dances are *ukukyikimba* and *ukugxiva* for amaXhosa and *isitshikitsha*, *amantshomane* and *iwosana* for amaNdebele pupils. Basically they show interest in each other's dances.

UNICEF together with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education through Joshua Mqabuko Polytechnic and Great Zimbabwe University trained teachers in some formerly marginalised languages to teach in the schools but never in IsiXhosa. The covered languages include XiTsonga, ChiVenda, TjiKalanga, ChiNambya, ChiTonga, SeSotho and learning materials were also produced through government aid. There are neither trained teachers in IsiXhosa language nor teaching and learning materials as in the other indigenous languages. The community elders wish to have the retired teachers to come back for service and help their children to learn their language. Efforts to get the program running were made through the establishment of a Xhosa Cultural Society committee which was tasked with ensuring that it kicks off with the help of the Ministry of Education as it provided the teachers and the logistics.

The Ministry sent the Indigenous Languages teachers for a workshop in Harare in 2017 to have the Indigenous Languages syllabus translated into various indigenous languages officially recognised. AmaXhosa teachers complain that the Indigenous Languages syllabus from the Ministry of Education is difficult to interpret and does not address the needs of amaXhosa. They also say the new curriculum text books have nothing on IsiXhosa. The only meaningful help was got from the Xhosa dictionary obtained online. The ECD classes are taught by untrained amaXhosa teachers.

The study showed that Midlands State University established a Language Institute Department at the beginning of 2019 whose mission was to provide language consultancy and support services to the university, Zimbabwe nation, Africa and beyond. The services offered cover translating and interpreting, dictionary making, developing orthographies for indigenous languages and brailing among other services. It was established that currently in their first phase, the languages on offer are: Braille, ChiNambya, ChiShona, ChiTonga, IsiNdebele, SeSotho, Sign Language and Tjikalanga. Plans are underway to introduce the other officially recognised languages in the second phase to cater for: Chewa, Chibarwe, ChiVenda English, Hwesa, IsiXhosa, Khoisan (Tshwawo), Ndaou and Shangani. The staff comprises of lecturers that were hand -picked from Teachers' Colleges to train teachers in addition to other services offered. They mainly service the Faculty of Education that recruits teachers to teach those languages in the schools and also Faculty of Arts. If the program prevails, it would go a long way towards alleviating the language problems of the country. There are plans also to address the Language Policy and Planning issue. It is hoped that IsiXhosa would also get the attention it deserves in the second phase.

### **5.2.1 Language impact**

Basically, the research findings from this study reveal that the contact between the two ethnic groups has resulted in a lot of similarities in the two languages in terms of terminology, phonology and morphology as well as some aspects of their cultures especially with the school children and the youths. These two groups are mostly affected because they interact more than the elders do. There is also a lot of borrowing of lexical items from each other's group such that

one ends up not knowing who borrowed from whom, since the two languages are both Nguni languages with a lot of common terms. IsiXhosa has the word *nyanisile* to mean true, while IsiNdebele has the equivalent *qinisile* but *nyanisi* for *qiniso* was also originally used by amaNdebele. IsiXhosa has *Inkukhu zizalela amaqanda* while IsiNdebele has *zibekela* in place of *zizalela* but this could be the pupil's error that made a literal translation of giving birth *ukuzala* of an animal.

The two languages are also similar to IsiZulu as it is found that they have some common lexical items with it as discovered from the written work by the pupils. The word *izihlangu* for shoes was found in IsiXhosa which is also found in IsiZulu as well as original IsiNdebele which later preferred *izicathulo*. IsiNdebele elongates where IsiXhosa syncopates as in IsiXhosa written as *neto zolahlela idothi* where IsiNdebele would have it as *lezinto zokulahlela izibi/ingcekeza*. Some terms are common like *uyazibetha* for beat also found in IsiNdebele although *tshaya* is also used. *Icawe* is found in both languages meaning church.

The findings indicate impact to a great extent as realised in some common syllables in the two languages such as *-ma*, *-ba*, *-tha* although there is a slight difference in phonology. In oral language, some similar phonemes have different spellings in the two languages which lead to the pupils mixing up spellings when writing either language. For example, *-tsh* in IsiNdebele is *-ty* in IsiXhosa as seen from the idiophone *-tshoko* also written as *-tyoko* by amaXhosa pupils noticed in the written work in the two languages for a short composition given about My school that was analysed. *Elitsheni* in IsiNdebele is a place for a rain-making ceremony and also *Elityeni* in IsiXhosa is for a marked ceremony place for cultural festivals and rituals for amaXhosa.

Some words are borrowed from one other language and used in the other while in other instances they are phonologised and pronounced in a different accent. IsiXhosa morphology accepts a double vowel while IsiNdebele does not, for example, *iinkomo* plural for *inkomo* in IsiXhosa while IsiNdebele has *izinkomo* for plural meaning cattle. Another example is *iintsomi* being plural for *intsomi* in IsiXhosa, while IsiNdebele has *izinganekwane* plural for *inganekwane* meaning folktales. Instead, a semi-vowel either *-y* or *-w* can be used in IsiNdebele to separate

vowels in vowel words or one of the vowels changes to become a semi-vowel like *-u+akha* that becomes *uyakha* meaning he is building, *-u+eba* becomes *weba* meaning he is stealing. In the first instance semi-vowel *-y* was used to separate the consecutive vowels while in the second instance the first vowel *-u* changed to become a semi-vowel *-w*. That way the words become palatable in sentence use. One of the teachers said some amaXhosa pupils have mustered IsiNdebele more than amaNdebele pupils.

As the pupils think of ideas to write in their compositions where they are imaginative, they think in both languages as proven by their written compositions which include words from both languages. There is a lot of code-switching and code-mixing. There was no figurative language in IsiXhosa but a lot in IsiNdebele where expressions were commonly similes and idiophones which in most cases were used correctly by the pupils in their written compositions. They had been mustered very well, especially idiophones relating to different common colours of green-*tshoko*, black-*tshu*, white-*nke/qhwa* and red-*gebhu*.

Ndebele proverbs and idioms were also common in their work although in some few cases they were inappropriately expressed for example, *Imali yimpande yesono* meaning “Money is the root of evil” as commonly said being a wrong quotation of a Biblical verse which reads, “The love of money is the root of all evil”. Another proverb inappropriately expressed is, *Umqwayi omhle uganyulwa emazweni* instead of *Induku enhle iganyulwa ezizweni* meaning precious things are obtained from afar, usually referring to obtaining a good wife from afar. Some other expressions are, *umakoti otsheniselwe umyeni* meaning a bride dressed for her bridegroom. *lilanga liphuma* for sunrise and *litshatshazi* for blister both referring to the beauty of the bride. The favourite simile is that which refers to beauty compared to a bride and her dress. I think there are a lot of weddings that take place in the area.

The impact is also noticed in their attempt to express numbers in IsiNdebele where some fail to do so properly but in IsiXhosa they do so well. It means they would be trying to write the language they have heard but have not mustered it. Pupil A wrote *abangusinhle* instead of *entle* in IsiXhosa for beautiful. We also find *sinezithelo* for *silezithelo* in IsiNdebele instead of *iziqhamo* in IsiXhosa for fruits. Another example is *abantu basemzi* in IsiXhosa for *abantu bemzini* in

IsiNdebele instead of *indwendwe* in IsiXhosa. We also find *bayahlonipha* which is an IsiNdebele word instead of *bayatlonipha* in IsiXhosa for respect. Lastly, *emhlonitshweni* which is an IsiNdebele spelling instead of *emhlonityweni* in IsiXhosa for assembly point.

Some of amaXhosa pupils including pupil B expressed number in IsiNdebele as in *angusithiyagalombili* instead of *ayisibhozo* in IsiXhosa while IsiNdebele has *ayisitshiyagalombili* for eight. Also, one wrote *ndiyazigqaja* in IsiXhosa instead of *nekratshi* for *ngiyazigqaja* in IsiNdebele meaning I am proud. Lastly the pupil wrote *sinothe* in IsiXhosa instead of *sityebile* for *sinothile* in IsiNdebele or *sicebile* meaning rich. *Cebile* is also a word found in IsiZulu.

Pupil C wrote *encolileyo* in IsiXhosa instead of *mdaka* for *engcolileyo* in IsiNdebele meaning dirty. *Umbhida* was written in IsiXhosa instead of *umfuno* for *umbhida* in IsiNdebele meaning vegetables. Lastly *sicecisiwe* in IsiXhosa instead of *sinokuhonjiswa* for *sicecisiwe* in IsiNdebele meaning decorated. Similarly, pupil E wrote *etsheniselwe* in IsiXhosa expressed the same as in IsiNdebele instead of *ayihlombise* meaning beautify.

Pupil D wrote *umtswankela* in IsiXhosa for *umtshwankela* in IsiNdebele meaning a traditional black wild fruit. There is a lot of IsiNdebele influence into IsiXhosa than there is IsiXhosa influence into IsiNdebele. The reason being that IsiNdebele is the one learnt at school while IsiXhosa is spoken at home and probably not much writing is involved in IsiXhosa. Interaction between the two ethnic groups is almost on a daily basis, automatically leading to impacting on each other in language and culture.

### **5.2.2 Cultural life**

The most outstanding cultural practice they proudly uphold is circumcision just like the Jews in the Bible. However the chief highlighted that in South Africa some initiates die during circumcision due to the fact that they no longer strictly follow the dictates of the practice. The Xhosa activist pointed out the reason as that in South Africa they have initiation schools whereby they deal with many boys at a time while in Mbembesi they deal with very small numbers of even one at a given time. This makes them concentrate a lot and observe all details related to the practice. Although modern researchers have advocated for circumcision in order

to curb the spread of STIs including HIV and AIDS, amaXhosa believe that they do it the right way.

AmaXhosa culture has largely remained intact with very little penetration from amaNdebele culture. The group has remained secretive when it comes to its life and festival activities. A few amaNdebele boys can be seen joining their friends in the circumcision act that is done in July during winter and can stretch up to September. When some uncircumcised boys avail themselves during their ceremony, they are seized and forcibly circumcised. Different terms are used for the boys related to this important cultural activity, *amakhwenkwe* are the uncircumcised boys, *abakhwetha* are *abasanda kusokwa* those just circumcised and *obhuti* are the circumcised unmarried boys who are respected in society. What has been noted is that the cultural activities and customs that form the gist of their culture have remained strictly observed to their fullest. Parents would rather sacrifice for the observance of such activities like *umguyo* celebration for the circumcision of the boys than sacrifice for their education comparatively speaking.

There are some common cultural aspects such as the way they slaughter a beast. One of the elders blames Christianity for watering down their culture and disturbing their way of life. He bemoaned people shunning traditional medicine of which he himself is a practicing herbalist. He also blamed the elite for misleading people in abandoning their culture. It was observed that the elders prefer African Traditional Religion to Christianity. Rain-making ceremony is performed at Mqwashwini at a place called *Elityeni*, similarly, amaNdebele also perform theirs at *Ematojeni* (Matopos) calling the place *Elitsheni* too.

They both worship ancestors (*izinyanga* in IsiXhosa and *amadlozi/abaphansi/abathuleyo/izithutha* in IsiNdebele) believing that the ancestors reward those who appease them and punish those who neglect them. Ancestors are invoked through a slaughter of animals to seek for their guide, support and favour. They turn to a diviner or healer for help in times of illness or the appearance of a goblin (*tokoloshe*) or disaster. God is referred to as *uQamata* in IsiXhosa and *uThixo/uMdali/uNkulunkulu/uMvelingqangi/uSomandla* in IsiNdebele. They revived their



*Fingo Oath* in 2019 whereby they were going back to their vows of loyalty to worshipping God the way they did the very first time they accepted Christianity (Nyathi, 2019).

Hlobo (2015) has the following to highlight: The two ethnic groups have some similar cultural practices like greeting all people that one meets especially old people addressing them by their title as father, mother, aunt, uncle or pastor. Boys and girls are taught traditions by their fathers and mothers respectively. Families arrange marriages and pay lobola in the form of say, ten cows or equivalent in money. They are taught to be loyal in a tribe or community and encouraged to share things. Hlobo (2015), records that the women decorate their faces with dots. There is a lot of beadwork found in the two ethnic groups.

AmaXhosa boys have influenced amaNdebele boys in carrying and blowing whistles. They have also influenced them in carrying knobkerries as a symbol of manhood just as we would have women carry handbags as a symbol of their womanhood. At times the boys use knobkerries at play *beqwaqwazana* which sometimes might generate into a fight.

The community is not utilising the facility of “Khulumani FM” which is a radio station recently established in Bulawayo for their benefit, where their language is broadcast live on air on various relevant topics. Many did not have any idea about the station. They fight hard to defend their language and culture. Proudly they profess that they are the only community in Zimbabwe with land title deeds.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE STUDY**

The following recommendations are suggestions believed to make a difference in the lives of amaXhosa community in Mbembesi area. It is hoped that if they could be implemented, the status of the language could be raised to the same level as other indigenous languages of the country.

- The Zimbabwe 2013 Constitution should be elaborated and clarified at all levels and various stakeholders involved in its implementation.
- The government should take affirmative action on IsiXhosa in terms of providing human and material resources for the advancement of learning of IsiXhosa in the schools and

tertiary institutions.

- There should be some outreach to the qualified amaXhosa teachers countrywide to initiate the teaching of IsiXhosa in the affected areas countrywide.
- The Ministry of Education should promote the teaching of IsiXhosa from ECD through the inclusion any Xhosa literate enough to teach in the schools.
- There should be a clear national language policy that has to be adhered to and a close monitoring of its implementation by the government.
- The Language Institute at Midlands State University recently established should spearhead the writing of learning material starting with the corpus, dictionary, study series, other materials and textbooks in all indigenous languages that are officially recognised.
- AmaXhosa educationists from South Africa can be contracted by the government to assist in the writing of the materials and training of teachers at colleges and universities in line with the language spoken in Zimbabwe alongside with the standard Xhosa of South Africa.
- The Non-Governmental Organisations can sponsor the advancement of neglected indigenous languages like IsiXhosa to ensure that they also enjoy the right of their languages in education and public life.
- IsiXhosa should be included in all media like advertisements, news, training programs, newspapers and public notices.
- Cultural exchange programs should be facilitated by the government to strengthen the identity feeling.
- The communities should work together with the schools in cooperation for the good of their children.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

The current study concentrated on an area in Matabeleland which is affected by IsiNdebele. There are other areas in Midlands, Masvingo and Mashonaland where amaXhosa are found that could also be studied to find out how ChiShona has impacted on IsiXhosa language and

amaXhosa culture. The areas include among others: Kennelworth, Chiwundura, Gutu, Goromonzi and Chitomborwizi. Some other researchers might be interested in studying the triglossic situation that amaXhosa find themselves in, pertaining to the three languages of IsiXhosa, IsiNdebele and English. Some other researchers could be interested in studying endangered languages like IsiXhosa in Zimbabwe and Tshwawo (Khoisan) language found in Tsholotsho and other places in Zimbabwe.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: PERMISSION LETTERS

#### A) Researcher's Letter Ministry-Provincial Education Director

CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS O226

All communications should be addressed to  
"The Provincial Education Director"  
Tele-Fax: 67574  
E-mail: [matnorth12@gmail.com](mailto:matnorth12@gmail.com)



Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education  
Matabeleland North Province  
P O Box 555  
Bulawayo  
Zimbabwe

23 August 2018

UNISA University of South Africa  
Preller Street Muckleneuk Ridge City of Tshwane  
P O Box 392 UNISA 0003  
South Africa

Attention: Ethelia Sibanda (Ms)

Student Number 43834221

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRYOUT A RESEARCH PROJECT:**  
**UMGUZA DISTRICT: MATABELELAND NORTH PROVINCIAL OFFICE.**

Reference is made to your letter dated 22 August 2018, requesting for permission to carry out a research project entitled "*The linguistic impact of the symbiotic relationship between amaNdebele and amaXhosa on the isiXhosa language and culture*" in the Mbembesi Primary Schools in Umguz District, Matabeleland North Province, Zimbabwe.

You are hereby granted permission to conduct your research in the above mentioned district. However, your research should not in any way disturb the smooth running of teaching and learning activities in schools.

You will be required to furnish the Province with a copy of your findings after the research.

**NB:** Before proceeding into schools, please ensure that you pass through the District Schools Inspector – Umguz.

  
Mphahlele J. A. (Mr.)  
A/Provincial Education Director – Matabeleland North.



**APPENDIX II: (B) MINISTRY APPLICATION FOR CLEARANCE**  
**CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS 0226**

Great Zimbabwe University  
Box 1235  
MASVINGO

22 August 2018

The Provincial Education Director  
Matabeleland North Region  
BULAWAYO

**RE: APPLICATION FOR CLEARANCE TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AT THE MBEMBESI SCHOOLS**

Dear Sir

I am a student at UNISA doing PhD studies. My topic requires that I collect data relating to the relationship between isiNdebele and isiXhosa as well as amaNdebele and amaXhosa cultures from the schools in Mbembesi. (See attached forms from UNISA)

I am therefore, asking for permission to visit the schools to carry out interviews with teachers and look at their documents.

I hope my request will be granted.

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully



Ethelia Sibanda (Lecturer)



# APPENDIX III: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE FROM UNISA CHS RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS O226



## COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

26 November 2018

Dear Ethelia Sibanda

**Decision:**  
**Ethics Approval from 26 November 2018 to 25 November 2023**

NHREC Registration # : Rec-240816-052  
CREC Reference # : 2018-CHS-0226  
Name Ethelia Sibanda  
Student #: 43834221

**Researcher(s):** Ethelia Sibanda

**Supervisor(s):** Prof DE Mutasa  
Department of African Languages  
[mutasde@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mutasde@unisa.ac.za)  
  
Dr S Spofana  
Department of African languages  
[dspofana@unisa.ac.za](mailto:dspofana@unisa.ac.za)

### Research Title

The linguistic impact of the symbiotic relationship between amaNdebele and amaXhosa on the isiXhosa language and culture in the Mbembesi area of Zimbabwe.

**Qualification:** PHD

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The **low risk application** was reviewed **and expedited** by the Chair of College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee on the 22 November 2018 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Department of Psychology Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (**25 November 2023**) Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2018-CHS-0226** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,



Signature : SURYA CRETTI

Prof Lizeth Roets  
Chair : CHS Research Ethics Committee  
E-mail: [roetsl@unisa.ac.za](mailto:roetsl@unisa.ac.za)  
Tel: (012) 429-2226



Signature :  
Professor A Phillips  
Executive Dean : CHS  
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## **APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS**

### **CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS O226**

1. Is your class a mixture of amaXhosa and amaNdebele students?
2. If so, do the children speak each other's language and are there no conflicts?
3. Which language do you speak and which one do you use in class when you communicate with them?
4. Which language is a medium of instruction in class and which of the two is taught as a subject?
5. Identify any similarities and differences in their languages?
6. Do you have any challenges in teaching the mixed class? If so, how do you address these challenges?
7. Do you have (appropriate) learning materials? List what you have and say how you obtained them.
8. Is there language mixing by pupils when they write their school work?
9. Is the 2013 Constitution being implemented on the teaching of IsiXhosa?
10. What do you think can be done to promote the teaching and learning of IsiXhosa?
11. What cultural activities do you engage your students in and for which ethnic group?
12. Are there no conflicts in observing those cultural activities? If so, how do you resolve them?
13. What do you think should be done to promote harmonious coexistence between the two ethnic groups?
14. What else can you say about the relationship of these two ethnic groups?

THANK YOU

## **APPENDIX V: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE ELDERLY**

### **CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS O226**

1. Do you have many Ndebele speakers in your community?
2. How frequent do you normally interact with them? Daily, weekly, etc!
3. What challenges, if any, do you face in communicating with IsiNdebele speakers?
4. What are the similarities between IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele? Give examples.
5. Are there any common or different words that mean the same thing? If so, give examples.
6. In your opinion, do you think there have been some changes in your language due to your contact with amaNdebele?
7. In social gatherings like weddings or funerals with amaNdebele, which language do you use and why?
8. Which cultural aspects are similar and which are different in your two ethnic groups?
9. Are there any conflicts that arise from cultural aspects? If so, how do you resolve them?
10. Are there no chances of your culture being embedded in the Ndebele culture or your loss of Identity?
11. Are you receiving radio programmes in your language on Khulumani FM radio station recently installed in Bulawayo? If so, how do you feel about the development?
12. What do you think can be done to promote your harmonious coexistence with amaNdebele?
13. What else would you like to say about your relationship with amaNdebele in this community?

THANK YOU

## **APPENDIX VI: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE YOUTHS**

### **CREC REFERENCE// 2018-CHS O226**

1. Do you associate with amaNdebele youths in your community?
2. What language do you speak together?
3. What similarities and differences are there in the two languages of IsiXhosa and IsiNdebele?
4. Do you think you have influenced each other's language that you now speak due to your contact?
5. Do you have your own language as youths that is different from that of adults, such as, words those are peculiar to your generation?
6. Do you sometimes hold any functions together as youths? If so, which functions and which language do you use?
7. Are there no conflicts that arise concerning language use? If so, how do you resolve them?
8. What cultural practices do you find similar and different?
9. What do you think can be done to promote your harmonious coexistence with amaNdebele?
10. What else would you want to say about your relationship with amaNdebele youths in this community?

THANK YOU

## APPENDIX VII: EDITOR'S LETTER

1917 Tembwe Street  
Runyararo  
Mucheke  
Masvingo  
Zimbabwe  
+263 772 973 022  
[jairosgonye@gmail.com](mailto:jairosgonye@gmail.com)  
[igonye@gzu.ac.zw](mailto:igonye@gzu.ac.zw)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**Re: Confirmation of Editing of Ethelia Sibanda's (Registration Number 43834221) doctoral thesis**

This is to certify that I, Jairos Gonye (National Identity Number 27-049723-X-27), have edited **Ethelia Sibanda's** doctoral thesis with the title **The linguistic impact of the symbiotic relationship between amaNdebele and amaXhosa on the isiXhosa language and amaXhosa culture in the Mbembesi area of Zimbabwe** to be submitted to the **University of South Africa (UNISA)** in terms of the requirements for the attainment of a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Languages, Linguistics and Literature. My qualifications are as follows: PHDA (English) (University of Venda); MA (English) (University of Zimbabwe); BA (Hons) (English) (University of Zimbabwe) and Graduate Certificate in Education (Grad.CE) (University of Zimbabwe).

Thank you



Date: 15/11/2019

Jairos Gonye (Associate Professor)  
Head Technical Team: Journal of New Vision in Educational Research (JoNVER)  
Great Zimbabwe University  
Robert Mugabe School of Education and Culture